M.A. HISTORY (First Semester)

Course- HIST 103

Aspects of Medieval Society

Lessons- 1-20

By: Dr. Naveen Vashishta



International Centre for Distance Education & Open Learning
Himachal Pradesh University, Gyan Path
Summer Hill, Shimla - 171005

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ASPECTS OF MEDIEVAL SOCIETY
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Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to the major social, religious and economic currents in medieval societies with a particular emphasis on Europe. Byzantium and the Islamic world between 500 and 1400. Course will explore some of the fundamental characteristics of this fascinating period of history, including the expansion of Christianity and the development of the Papacy and the rise of Islam, evolution of various forms of economic systems and social structures, particularly the emergence of feudal society in Europe. It was the period that witnessed the profound transformation particularly of Europe in economic, social, and political spheres, that transformation will be examined in the context of improvements in agricultural and industrial production, besides the expansion of trade and commerce. A radical cultural change took place in those centuries, whereby a new world of' Christian Europe' was built upon the remnants of the classical civilization. Many cultural trails of that world have survived into modern tunes and are repeatedly invoked in modern debates on European identity.

Course Learning Outcomes

After studying this course, students would be able to

a. Identify the fundamental features of the medieval period and understand the problems of defining the medieval period.
b. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Medieval world between c.500 and c.1400.
c. Appreciate that there are different approaches to the study of historical periods.
d. Engage with the substantive issues of change and continuity during this period.
e. Understand the principal changes happened in medieval agriculture and production technique, trade and commerce.
f. See how identities were constructed and contested in the medieval period.

Unit-I

1. Transition from ancient to medieval world: End of Roman empire in west, causes; east-west divide.
2. Reign of Charlemagne and the Carolingian renaissance.
3. Church in Medieval Europe and its diverse manifestation, rise of the papacy.

Unit-II

4. Pre-Islamic tribal society in Arabia.
5. Rise of Islam: Prophet and his teachings: evolution of Islamic state; rule of first four caliphs; Umayyad to Abbasid caliphate.
6. Arab contributions to civilization.

Unit-III

7. Feudalism in medieval Europe: early formulations, ties of dependence, mode of production, forms and structures, mutual obligations of lords and vassals, evolution and types of fiefs.
8. The rise and full of the manorial system.
9. State, society and religion in the late medieval China.

Unit-IV

10. [a] Population and agriculture in Medieval period: population in Europe, volume and nature of agricultural production [b] Towns and the urbanization of medieval society; pre-industrial town, beginnings of urban society and economy.
11. Medieval trade and commerce: oceanic trade. India's maritime trade. European in the Indian ocean pattern and routes of trade, centres of commercial activities and commercial practices.
12. Transition to modem world: meaning of modern word, decay of Feudalism, transformations of political structures and trading activities, economic and cultural transformation, new methods of warfare.

Essential Readings

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UNIT-I

CHAPTER-1

TRANSITION FROM ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL WORLD

Structure:

1.0 Introduction

History has been divided into the ancient, medieval and modern periods for the sake of convenience of study. However,there is no fixed date or even a century to demarcate these periods.The concept of ancient, medieval and modern is amorphous.It differs according to regions. Still there are characteristic features of these epochs.The accepted demarcations of ancient, medieval and modern world is a Europe centric one.

The Medieval Period of history is also called the Middle Ages. It refers to the period which succeeded the Ancient Period and preceded the Modern Period. The Medieval Period is an important stage in the evolution of human society. The accomplishments and glories of the Medieval Period were also significant steps towards the Modern Period. The Europeans coined the term 'Middle Ages' in the 17thcentury because they perceived it as a long and dark period of interruption between the Classical Period of Ancient Greek and Roman Civilizations and their own Modern Age. However, the Medieval Period was not essentially a dark period or an

interruption. For the Islamic world, it was a period when a civilization flourished and reached its zenith. In India, it was regarded as the age of synthesis. It witnessed a fusion of old and new social, economic and political systems. As a result of this fusion, theredeveloped a unique cultural pattern of co-existence and acceptance that became the symbol of the Medieval Period of India. Even in Europe, the picture was not as gloomy as it is sometimes depicted. Undoubtedly, the level of material and cultural accomplishment in the early Medieval Period wasslightly low. However, during the later part there was significant improvementthe standard of living of the Europeans. They developed new institutions of learning and new modes of thought and attained very high standards in the field of art and literature. Europe was transformed as a result of the new ideas that emerged during this time. It also had a deep impact on the rest of the world in the future.

The decline of Western Roman Empire in 476 CE is regarded as the end of ancient period and beginning of the medieval period. The eastern Roman Empire continued to exist for the next thousand years.The general characteristics of the transition from ancient to medieval worldincludes the decline of ancient empire, decline of trade and urban centers, development of feudal land relations growth of regional kingdoms in the West andrise of new empires in the East etc.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the transformation of the ancient to medieval world.
- Analyze the factors responsible for the crisis and decline of the ancient Roman Empire.
- Examine the differences between the Eastern and Western Civilizations.

1.1 End of Roman Empire in West

The Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern territories. The Western provinces had their capital in **Rome**. In 330 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine had established the new capital of the Eastern territories in the ancient Greek city of Byzantine which came to be known as **Constantinople** after his name. This Eastern Roman Empire reached very high standards of economic and cultural life at a time when Western Europe was in a comparatively backward condition.

The decline of Western Roman Empire that stood as a mighty edifice for many centuries holding all the splendor of a glorious civilization has been the sensational events in history. The eastern Roman Empire continued to exist for about a thousand years more and the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453CE, following the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks is considered to be the culmination of the medieval period and the beginning of modern period.

1.1.1 Causes of the Decline of Roman Empire

The decline of Roman Empire, particularly its Western half, is one of the most written about and debated subjects in history of the ancient world. The end of Western Roman Empirewas the process of decline during which the Empire failed to enforce its rule and exercise effective control over its territories. It involved deep social, economic and cultural issues.The

fall of the Roman Empire was not sudden. It had been a prolonged process, giving credence to the popular proverb, "*Rome was not built in a day nor was it destroyed in a day*". Several factors have been analyzed by the scholars in an attempt to present a picture of crisis and decline of a monolithic Roman Empire which are discussed below.

1.1.1.1 Invasions by Barbarian Tribes

The most candid theory for the collapse of the Western Roman Empireexplains the military losses sustained by the barbarian invaders. Rome had tangled with Germanic tribes for centuries, but from the third century onwards barbarian groups such as the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Huns and others had encroached beyond the Empire's borders. The Romans endured a Germanic uprising in the late fourth century, but in 410CE, Alaric, the king of Gothic tribes, successfully sacked the city of Rome. The Roman Empire spent the next several decades under constant threat before Rome was raided again raided by the Vandals in 455CE. Finally Odoacer, the Germanic soldier in the Roman army,revolted and deposed the last Emperor Romulus Augustus in 476 CE. Thereafter, no Roman emperor ruled again from a post in Italy, leading many to cite the year 476CE as the year the Western Empire suffered its destruction.

However, Arnold Toynbee believes that foreign invasions are not a cause but symptom of the fall of empires. When an empire is powerful outsiders would no one dare to attack it. But when it shows signs of decline foreigners will be bold enough to attack it. Infact much before these 'invasions' there has been a regular infiltration of these invaders into Rome.They were employed in Roman army civil service and various other fields and the Romans were familiar with the barbarians. But from the third century onwards there were regular barbarian invasions on Rome.

1.1.1.2 Economic Crisis and Overreliance on Slave Labor

During the period when Rome was under attack from foreign invaders, it was also disintegrating from within due to severe financial crisis. Incessant wars and extravagance had significantly reduced the imperial reserves.Heavy tax burdens, inflation and debasement of coins had widened the gap between rich and poor. It was not easy to control the inflation. Diocletian through his famous price edict of 301 CE, however, managed to check inflation. Both Diocletian and Constantine had arranged for the collection of taxes in kind. This led to decline in coinage which adversely affected trade and commerce. Many of these changes proved irreversible. The decline in trade and industry badly affected the middle class and the ruined middleclass could not be recreated on the level of local government. Perry Anderson believes that urban trade and industry gradually declined in all provinces of Roman Empire. The enlargement and maintenance of the military required the imposition of higher taxes. This policy of increased taxation was successful in the east but it produced crisis in Western part of the empire.

In order to avoid taxation, many members of the wealthy classes had even fled to the countryside and established independent fiefdoms. Simultaneously, there was scarcity of labor. The economy of Roman Empire depended on serfs or slaves to till its fields and work as

craftsmen, and its military power had provided a fresh influx of conquered peoples to put to work. They were tied to the soil. There was a general tendency to bind men to their occupations and their work gradually became hereditary. By the time of Constantine, the Roman state began to control the lives of all citizens in an unprecedented manner. It was compelled by the turmoil of the times.Thus the policies of the Roman emperors during the period of decline destroyed the freedom of the people and the restricted the autonomy of the provinces. However, in the second century when expansion ceased, Rome's supply of slaves and other war treasures began to dry up. A further setback came in the fifth century, when the Vandals claimed North Africa and began disrupting the empire's trade by raiding the Mediterranean as pirates. Due to the failure of economy and its commercial and agricultural production in decline, the Empire began to lose its control over Europe.

The economic crisis confronting the Late Empire was heightened by an exploitative revenue collection system and the practice of absentee landlordism. The policy of increased centralization and taxationfollowed by Diocletian and Constantine to streamline the functioning of the Roman state, proved to be successful in the east but aggravated the crisis in the west. The burden of increased taxation was passed on to the peasants, artisans, and petty traders, adversely affecting all sectors of the economy. At the local level, tax collection was in the hands of *decuriones* or *curiales*, who were part of the local elite and with time, became a hereditary group. They collaborated with the privileged sections and got their land underassessed, to help them evade taxation. On the other hand, the smaller landlords' land, was often overassessed. The absentee landlords passed on their own tax liabilities by exacting illegal cesses from the less privileged sections. According to A.H.M. Jones (1964) a corrupt and incompetent aristocracy presided over the administrative and revenue affairs of the state in the Western Roman Empire. And when they could not determine the choice of emperor, they became uncooperative, and withdrew to their power bases in the countryside.

1.1.1.3The Rise of the Eastern Empire

Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305 CE) divided the Empire into two halves—the Western Empire seated in the city of Milan, and the Eastern Empire in Byzantium, later known as Constantinople. This division partially sealed the fate of Europe in the late third century. The division made the empire more easily governable in the short term, but over time the two halves were alienated. East and West could not work together to combat outside threats, and the two often quarreled over resources and military aid. As the gulf widened, mainly Greek-speaking Eastern Empire grew in wealth while the Latin-speaking West descended into economic crisis. Above all, the strength of the Eastern Empire contributed to divert Barbarian invasions to the West. Emperors such as Constantine ensured that the city of Constantinople was fortified and well-defended, but Italy and the city of Rome-which only had symbolic value, were left vulnerable. The Western Roman Empire finally disintegrated in thefifth century, but the Eastern Empire continued in some form for another thousand years before being overwhelmed by the Turks in 1453 CE.



Diocletian

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Diocletianus

1.1.1.4 Over-expansion and Military Overspending

The Roman Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Euphrates River in the West Asia at its zenith.According to historians, the vastness of the empire may have also been the cause of its downfall. The empire was faced with an administrative and logistical nightmare as a result of over-expansion. Despite of their excellent road systems, the Romans failed to communicate quickly or effectively enough to manage their holdings. The empire struggled to deploy enough troops and resources to defend its frontiers from local rebellions and foreign attacks, and by the second century the Emperor Hadrian (117-138 CE) was forced to build his famous wall in Britain in order to defend the empire from the enemy.

Roman army was an important factor in the expansion of the Roman Empire. Emperor Diocletian reorganized the army and introduced conscription. By the end of the second century CE there was no further territorial expansion. As a result, the Roman state resorted to a defensive policy with regard to the Germanic tribes and sought to increase the strength of the army. From 250,000 regular troops at the time of the death of Augustus, the Roman army maintained 650,000 men in the fourth century CE. Thus, in order to maintain such a huge army, the state enacted heavy taxation, whichalienated large sections of the people.As more and more funds were funneled into the military upkeep of the empire, technological advancement slowed and Rome's civil infrastructure fell into disrepair.

1.1.1.5Crisis of Governance and Political Instability

The ineffective and inconsistent leadership magnify the problem of maintaining such a vast empire. It became very difficult to govern Rome during the tumultuoussecond and the third centuries. Civil wars thrust the empire into chaos, and in a span of only 75 years more than 20 men ascended the throne, usually after the murder of their predecessor. Civil wars, thus, contributed to the political turmoiland rendered effective governance untenable. The Praetorian Guards assassinated and installed new sovereigns at will, and once even auctioned the spot off to the highest bidder. The political deterioration also extended to the Roman Senate, which failed to temper the excesses of the emperors due to its own prevalent corruption and incompetence. As the situation deteriorated, civic pride diminished and many Roman citizens lost trust in their leadership.

1.1.1.6 The Arrival of the Huns and the Migration of the Barbarian Tribes

The barbarian attacks on Rome,were in part, the result of mass migration caused due to Huns invasion of Europe in the late fourth century. When these Eurasian warriors rioted northern Europe, they drove many Germanic tribes to the borders of the Roman Empire. The Romans reluctantly allowed members of the Visigoth tribe to cross south of the Danube and into the safety of Roman territory, but they treated them badly. Historian Ammianus Marcellinus, mentions that Roman officials even compelled the starving Goths to trade their children into slavery in exchange for dog meat. Thus, by treating the Goths severely, the Romans created a dangerous enemy within their own borders. When the oppression increased the Goths revolted and ultimately routed a Roman army and killed the Eastern Emperor Valens during the Battle of Adrianople in 378 CE. The shocked Romans entered into peace with the barbarians, but the truce unraveled in 410CE, when the Goth King Alaric moved west and sacked Rome. With the weakening of the Western Empire, Germanic tribes such as the Vandals and the Saxons were able to surge across its borders and occupy Britain, Spain and North Africa.

1.1.1.7Christianity and the Loss of Traditional Values

Some historians have argued that the rise of Christianity helped contribute to the fall of the Roman Empire. The Edict of Milan legalized Christianity in 313 CE, and it later became the state religion in 380 CE. These decrees put an end to the centuries of persecution, but they may have also eroded the traditional Roman values system. Christianity displaced the polytheistic Roman religion, which believed in the theory of divine rights of kings, and also shifted focus away from the glory of the state and onto a sole deity. In the meantime, the participation of popes and other church leaders in the political matters, further complicated the governance. Edward Gibbon, the 18thcentury historian, was the most famous proponent of this theory. Gibbon's argued that the insensible penetration of Christianity in the empire fatally undermined the genius of a great people. However, his view has since been widely criticized. The problem with his explanation is two-fold. First of all, this explanation is too narrow as it is difficult to believe one single factor was responsible for the fall of empire. More importantly, it is clear that the Eastern Roman Empire was by far more Christian as compared to the West, therefore if Christianity was behind the fall, the East should have fallen first.A majority of scholars now argue that the influence of Christianitydiminished in comparison to military, economic and administrative factors.

1.1.1.8 Weakening of the Roman Legions

The military of Roman Empire was the very life force which held the empire together. The Roman military was the envy of the ancient world. It would not have been possible for Roman Empire to create such a vast empire without a strong army. However, from the mid-third century onwards, this vital component to the success and stability of the empire slowly withered away. The makeup of the once mighty legions began to change. Poor imperial strategy coupled with the deteriorating quality of the soldiery exposed the empire to increasing barbarian attacks which overwhelmed the remaining Roman military forces. When the Roman Empire failed to recruit enough soldiers from amongst the Roman citizens, emperors such as Diocletian and Constantine began engaging foreign mercenaries to prop up their armies. The ranks of the legions eventually enhanced with Germanic Goths and other barbarians, to such an extent that Romans began using the Latin word “barbarus” in place of “soldier.” While these Germanic soldiers were fierce warriors, they also had little or no loyalty to the empire, and their power-hungry officers often turned against their Roman employers. In fact, many of the barbarians who sacked the city of Rome and brought down the Western Empire had earned their military stripes while serving in the Roman legions.

The nomadic Huns from Central Asia invaded West Asia and East Europe in 378 CE. The Visigothic tribe got into a skirmish with the Romans in modern-day Turkey. They forced Rome to allow the settlement of their people within the empire’s borders. The Roman practice of hiring mercenary soldiers eventually led to the Germanic soldiers outnumbering the Romans in the imperial army. Tragically, many of the barbarians who sacked the city of Rome had earned their military stripes while serving in the Roman legions. For example, the Visigoth soldiers worked against the empire and turned on Roman citizens and plundered the city of Rome in 410 CE.

1.1.2 Historiography: Crises and Decline of the Roman Empire

From the 18thcentury onwards western historians have treated the year 476 CE as the terminal point of the Roman Empire. It marked the end of Greco-Roman antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. However, many other scholars have argued that no satisfactory date for the fall of Roman Empire can be establishedas the decline occurred over a long period of time. Perhaps the crisis and end of the empire were entrenched in its structural faults, and over-expansive imperial nature. Earlier historians considered deposition of Emperor Romulus Augustus as the crucial moment of transition, more recent works on the history of Europe have pushed back the date of the commencement of the Medieval period to 300 CE.

The topic of the decline of the Roman Empire is much debated. In terms of intellectual scholarship, it was introduced by one of the most influential modern historians, Edward Gibbon, in his multi-volume book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776)*. Gibbon blamed Christianity charging that it destroyed the civic spirit of the Romans, and the Church usurped political power from the state. Marx and Engels, the exponents of historical materialism, contended that since slavery had overwhelmed all forms of labor, and was now becoming

extinct, the Roman world reached adeadlock. Michael Rostovtzeff, the Russian scholar, credited the fall of the Empire to social tensions and to the constant pressure exerted by the disadvantaged masses to gain a share in the power and wealth of the rulers. The English historian, F.W. Walbank regarded slavery as the main cause of the technological sluggishness and general loss of vitality in the Roman world. According to some scholars the influx of Greeks and Orientals diluted the original Roman sense of unity and to the shrinking ruling class as the main cause of the downfall. The German historian O. Seeck, opined that the political characteristic of the Roman world was a systematic 'extermination of the best', leaving a vacuum to be filled by men of inferior worth, that ultimately proved to be fatal for the empire.

Scholars such as J.B. Bury, E. Stein, A. Piganiol and others added fresh insights to the subject of the Roman decline. A. Dopsch argued that the Germanic invasions did not represent a complete break with the Roman past, and that the Germanic states that developed on its ruins continued with Roman practices, and institutions. Italian historian S. Mazzarino held that the fall of Rome came about as a result of decadence and economic mismanagement. A.H.M. Jones highlighted the geographic and socio-economic factors and maintained that as the Western Roman Empire advanced through the Rhine and Danube areas, conflict with the Germanic tribes became inevitable. This resulted in an increase in the strength of the armed forces, and related pressure of taxation borne by the direct producers was the vital cause of this decline. Oswald Spengler (1926 CE)postulated that the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire formed an intermediate stage between the ancient world and its successor states. A.J Toynbee (1965 CE)opined that the collapse of Roman Empire was due to the joint attack of the internal proletariat and external proletariat. In the recent times, archaeologists working with chemical analysis of the skeletal remains recovered from the 1st century CE have arrived at the conclusion that ancient Romans were succumbing to chronic lead poisoning, for their food and wine were heavily contaminated with lead. Bryan Ward-Perkins (2006 CE) opines that there was an extraordinary fall in the material culture of later Roman centuries. He believes that the Western Roman Empire declined due to specific military crisis–Germanic invasion, aggravated by the arrival of the Huns, and worsenedby civil wars within the empire–rather than by an irreversible internal decline.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Name the capital of the Western Roman Empire.
2. What was the name of the capital of Eastern Roman Empire established by Roman Emperor Constantine?
3. Name the historian who opined that a corrupt and incompetent aristocracy presided over the administrative and revenue affairs of the state in the Western Roman Empire.
4. Which Roman Emperor divided the Empire into two halves—the Western Roman Empire seated in the capital of Milan and the Eastern Roman Empire in Byzantium?
5. Who wrote the book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776)?

6. How was the vastness of the Roman Empire responsible for its decline?
7. When did nomadic Huns from Central Asia invaded West Asia and East Europe?
8. Name the Russian scholar who credited the fall of the Empire to social tensions and to the constant pressure exerted by the disadvantaged masses to gain a share in the power and wealth of the rulers.

1.2 East-West Divide

In history, Asia (excluding Siberia) was considered as the East and Europe was regarded as the West. During the Middle Ages, numerous civilizations present in both East and West were alike in some ways, and irreconcilably different in others. When the two societies interacted, the differences in the social class system were one of the key issues that affected many spheres of life. The divide between Eastern social system and feudalism, opposingprocedures of trade and agriculture, and fluctuating stability of governments resulted in an ever widening gap between the two ways of life. The Eastern and the Western civilizations are not only different because of their location, but also because of their social class system, their ways of making money, and leadership styles.

The day-to-day life of the common people in the Eastern and the Western Civilizations differed to a great extenton the basis of how their society was run, and what it was focused on. Feudalism and manorialism were the two of the major differences between the societies of theEast and the West. These two factors shaped the social hierarchy and the overall life of the common people in the East. The manorial system was established with a lord at the top of the hierarchy who owned a large amount of land. He employed a number of serfs and peasants. They paid a rent of crop to the lord in exchange for the land they got for cultivation. This feudal society was every man for himself and did not aid in the growth of a civilization.

There was difference between the social systems of the East and the West. Mongolia rose from nomadic tribes integrated by Genghis Khan. He conquered the adjoining areas and created a vast empire. He gave the defenders a choice to either join him or die. This brutal mentality was exposed when they subjugated the vast majority of Asia and some of Europe and the Middle East. The increased social mobility of Tang dynasty of Chinawas the distinguishing feature. They had a sequence of tests that could be taken for upward social mobility. Instead of the high-ranking positions being solely for the aristocrats, they were easier for the poor to gain access to. It was difficult to move up or down in the social classes in the West. However, mobility was possible in the Eastern Civilizations.For example, in China upward social mobility was possible through tests and, in Mongolia it was possible to acquire rank in the army by means of military skills because the society was based on its military prowess.

The Eastern and the Western civilizations varied politically because the common people of the East were not always satisfied with their leadership. However, there was no unrest among the people in the West although they had many rulers in a short period of time. There were rebellions in Eastern civilizations and long gaps between the rulers that resulted in unrest. There was a major war in England for the throne that occurred for almost hundred years. In the 14^{th}

and 15th centuries there were many struggles in England for the throne that caused much bloodshed. France also had problems in their government. During this, England still managed to fight the French and almost win in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453 CE). The government was not always stable in the Eastern Civilizations. During the reign of Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) in China, there occurred one of the deadliest events in human history. The An Lushan Rebellion (755-763 CE) caused a lot of bloodshed and demonstrated the instability in the Chinese government.

Economically, the Eastern and the Western Civilizations were considerably different regarding the means of acquiring money. Trade was a major economic factor in China. The Chinese were associatedwith Europe with the Silk Road which was a series of trade routes from East Asia to Europe. This road was not only utilized to trade goods, it was also became a place for trading ways of thought or religion. The English introduced a distinct type of feudalism called **bastard feudalism**.This term was coined by historian Charles Plummer in 1885. This type of feudalism, prominent in the War of the Roses, was different from regular feudalism as it incorporated money into the social hierarchy. Nobles could now pay money to their knights for their service instead of giving them land. This reinforced the feudal system because if there was a weak ruler, the strong government of the new nobles would support the people. The British nobles also created Magna Carta to diminish the power of the kings. This monetization of the class system changed the manner in which England was ruled and made it very different from the Eastern Civilizations.

Self-Check Exercise

9. Name thetwo major differences between the societies of the East and the West.
10. What was Bastard Feudalism?

1.3 Summary

- The decline of Western Roman Empire in 476 CE is regarded as the end of ancient period and beginning of the medieval period.
- The general characteristics of the transition from ancient to medieval world includes the decline of ancient empire, decline of trade and urban centers, development of feudal land relations growth of regional kingdoms in the West and rise of new empires in the East etc.
- The Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern territories. The Western provinces had their capital in Rome and the Eastern territories with its capital at Constantinople.
- The decline of Roman Empire, particularly its Western half, is one of the most written about and debated subjects in history of the ancient world.
- Several factors such as invasions by the barbarian tribes, economic crisis and overreliance on slaver labour, rise of eastern empire, overexpansion and military overspending, crisis of governance and political instability, Christianity and loss of traditional values and weakening of the Roman legions etc. have been attributed to the decline of Roman Empire.

- The topic of the decline of the Roman Empire is much debated. In terms of intellectual scholarship, it was introduced by one of the most influential modern historians Edward Gibbon. Later on Michael Rostovtzeff, F.W Walbank, O.Seeck, J.B Bury, E.Stein, A.H.M Jones, A.J Toynbee and others forwarded various theories of decline.
- In history, Asia (excluding Siberia) was considered as the East and Europe was regarded as the West. During the Middle Ages, numerous civilizations present in both East and West were alike in some ways, and irreconcilably different in others.
- The divide between Eastern social system and feudalism, opposing procedures of trade and agriculture, and fluctuating stability of governments resulted in an ever widening gap between the two ways of life. The East and West varied socially, economically and politically.

1.4 Glossary

- **Conscription:** Compulsory enlistment for state service, typically into the armed forces.
- **Legions:** A division of 3,000 to 6,000 men, including a complement of cavalry, in the ancient Roman army.
- **Magna Carta:** A charter of liberties to which the English barons forced King John to give his assent in 1215 at Runnymede.
- **Proletariat:** The lowest class of citizens in ancient Rome.
- **Silk Road:** A network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe.

1.5 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Rome
2. Constantinople
3. A.H.M Jones
4. Diocletian
5. Edward Gibbon
6. Refer to sub-section 1.1.1.4
7. 378 CE
8. Michael Rostovtzeff
9. Feudalism and Manoralism
10. Refer to section 1.2

1.6 Suggested Readings

1. Goldsworthy, Adrian. *The Fall of the West: The Slow Death of the Roman Superpower*, Phoenix, an imprint of Orion Books Ltd, 2010.
2. *Halsall, Guy, Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West: 376–568, Cambridge University Press, 2007.*

3. Harper, Kyle. *The Fate of Rome. Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire.* Princeton University Press 2017.
4. Heather, Peter. *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History*. Pan Books, 2006.
5. MacMullen, Ramsay, *Corruption and the Decline of Rome*, Yale University Press, 1988.
6. Ward-Perkins Bryan, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, Oxford University Press, 2005

1.7 Terminal Questions

1. Describe the changes that took place in the political and economic life in Western Europe after the downfall of the Roman Empire.
2. Discuss the economic crisis and overreliance on slave labor as the cause for the decline of the Roman Empire.
3. Account for the fiscal and monetary crisis of the Roman Empire in the third century CE.
4. Was the decline of the Western Roman Empire an outcome of its internal crisis alone?
5. Analyze the historiography of the crisis and decline of the Roman Empire.
6. Write an essay on the East-West divide.

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CHPATER-2
REIGN OF CHARLEMAGNE

Structure

2.0 Introduction

*Charlemagne was one of the great leaders of the Middle Ages. He was the king of the Franks and later became the Holy Roman Emperor. He contributed a lotin defining the shape and character of medieval Europe and presided over the Carolingian Renaissance.*He ascended the throne at a time when powerful forces of change were effecting his kingdom. His reign shaped the course of history in Western Europe and, to a certain extent, the entire history of the Middle Ages in the West.The unique feature of Charlemagne's reign was his effort to honour the age-old customs and expectations of Frankish kingship while responding creatively to the new forces intruding on the society.Hehad an imposing physical presence blessed with extraordinary energy, personal courage, and an iron will.

Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Describe the early life and campaigns of Emperor Charlemagne,
- Understand the system of administration of Charlemagne,
- Examine the contribution of Charlemagne in the development of learning.

2.1 Reign of Charlemagne

In Western Europe, the reign of Charlemagne(768-814 CE) is remembered today for its expansionary and unifying accomplishments throughout the region.

2.1.1 Early Life

Charlemagne (referred to as Carlous Magnus, i.e. Charles the Great in Latin texts, after whom Carolingian dynasty is named) was born in 742 CE. He was the son of King Pippin the Short who was the mayor of the palace of the Merovingian king. However, he actually wielded effective power over the Frankish kingdom.Charlemagne received practical training for leadership by participating in the political, social, and military activities related with his father's court. His early years were marked by a succession of events that had immense implications for the Frankish position in the contemporary world. With papal arrival Pippin seized the throne from Childeric III, the last Merovingian king. Later on, he forged an alliance with the Pope by committing himself to protect Rome in return for papal sanction of the right of Pippin to the throne of the Frankish kingdom.

Charlemagne became the king of one portion of the Frankish empire after Pippin III died in 768 CE. Pippin III had divided the empire between his two sons, Carloman II and Charlemagne. However, the rivalry between the two brothers threatened the unity of the Frankish kingdom Carloman II died three years later and in 771 CE Charlemagne became the king of all the Frankish territories and ruled till 814 CE. The expanded Frankish state that Charlemagne founded is known as the **Carolingian Empire**. He was later canonized by Antipope Paschal III.



Emperor Charlemagne

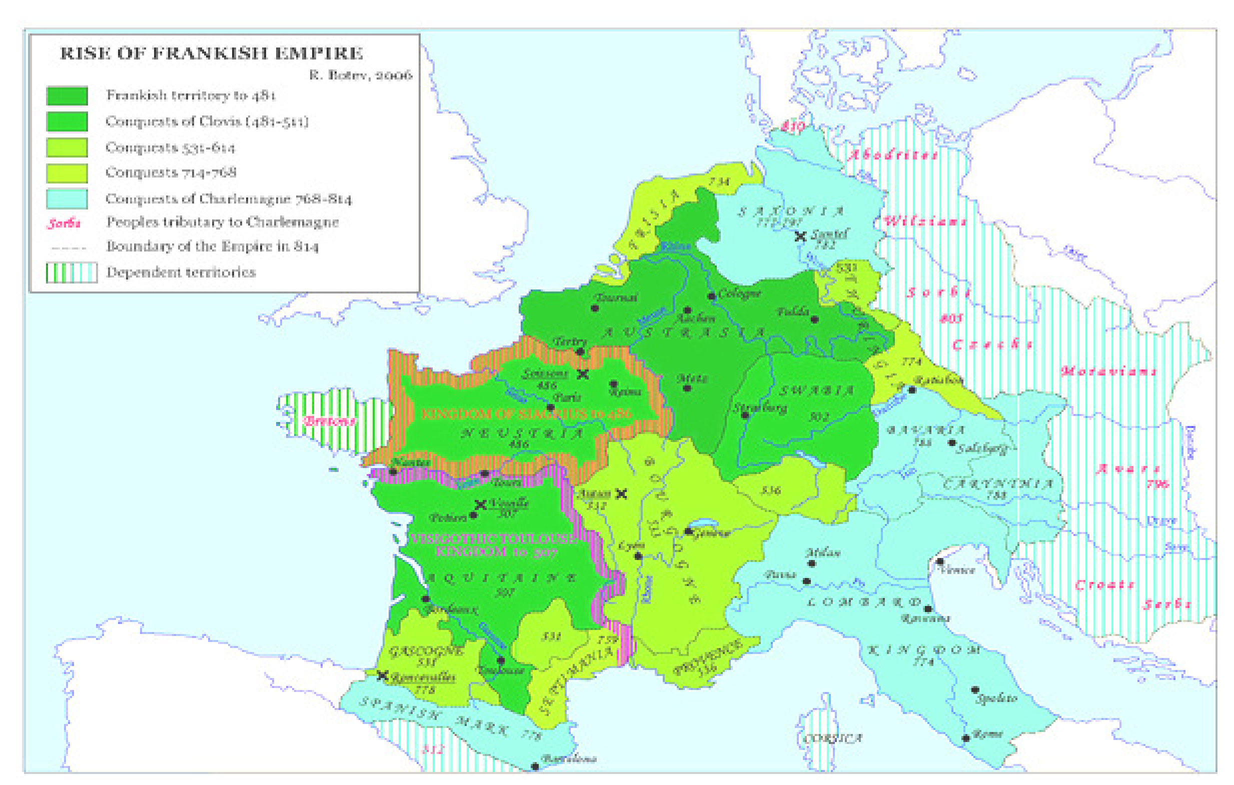
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charlemagne-by-Durer.jpg

2.1.2 Campaigns

The first three decades of his reign were dominated by military campaigns which were prompted by many factors such as the need to protect his realm from external enemies and internal separatists, an urge for conquest and booty and a desire to spread Christianity. He is remembered even today for its expansionary and unifying accomplishments throughout the Western Europe.

Most of the battles that Charlemagne fought were against the Saxons who gave a lot of trouble to his subjects. After gaining success over them he forced them to embrace Christianity. Those who refused were mercilessly killed. One of Charlemagne's initial campaigns was directed against the Lombard kingdom of northern Italy. The Lombards had conquered some of the territories ruled by the Pope. These territories are generally called as Papal States which were situated in central Italy and were directly governed by the Pope. The Pope was finding it difficult to resist the attacks of Lombards and appealed to Charlemagne for military assistance. So Charlemagne continued his father's policy towards the Papal States and became its protector. In 773 CE, he responded to the Pope's request by leading his army into Italy. He defeated the Lombards and occupied Pavia, the capital of Lombard kingdom. Thereafter he started calling himself "**King of the Franks and Lombards**". The Papal States were restored to the Pope and the Lombard territories were annexed. North Italy also became part of the Carolingian Empire. This event enhanced the prestige of Charlemagne and strengthened the alliance between the Pope and the Frankish state.

Charlemagne overthrew the king of Bavaria. He annexed Bavaria into his kingdom. He fought the Moors (Arabs) in Spain and got a strip of land lying south of the Pyranees. Charlemagne waged wars not only to expand his kingdom into an empire but also to acquire wealth through plunder. At the end of his reign, his empire comprised France, present territories of Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, western Germany, Northern Italy and a small portion of Spain. A number of Germanic tribes living in the east of the Rhine were conquered and brought under the Frankish rule. The Carolingian Empire was the largest and most powerful political entity in the Western Europe in the beginning of the 9th century. Aachen (or Aix-la-Chapelle in Germany) was the principal seat of government. Charlemagne was successful in consolidating his position when Pope Leo III crowned him as "**Emperor of the Romans**" by on Christmas Day in 800 CE at Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome thereby indicating that he was the natural successor to the extinct Roman Empire.Charlemagne has been called the "**Father of Europe**" (*Pater Europae*), as he united most of Western Europe for the first time since the classical era of the Roman Empire and united parts of Europe that had never been under Frankish or Roman rule. This movement proved to be of far-reaching historical significance because to some extent it aided Charlemagne and his successors to project themselves as the legitimate heirs of the monarchial traditions of the later Roman Empire. It also served to highlight the political unification of the West which had been achieved by Charlemagne. He was acknowledged as the undisputed master of the Western provinces of the former Roman Empire (excluding Spain and Britain, but including Germany which had not been a part of Rome).



Frankish Empire

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_Carolingian_Empire#/media/File:Frankish_empire.jpg

By conferring the title of Roman Emperor on Charlemagne, Pope Leo III cemented the ties between the Church and the Carolingian Empire. The Carolingians got the support of the church, its institutions and officials. Pope's own authority was greatly enhanced. In future it became very important for thee emperors to secure the recognition of the Pope to legitimize their authority. This gave the church some say in the affairs of the state, which henceforth led to serious conflicts between the Church and the state.[1]

The crowning of the Roman Emperor by the Pope had some implications for the concept of monarchy in medieval Europe. It signified that the emperor's authority had a divine sanction. Thus, monarchial power was based on the divine right to rule and hence it was absolute. The successors of Charlemagne proclaimed the title of '**Holy Roman Emperor**' and the territories over which they ruled were designated as the '**Holy Roman Empire**'. In an age when the emperors were generally not in a position to exercise centralized control over the empire, this terminology and ritual aided the institution of monarchy to maintain its significance within the political structure that was developing in Western Europe. The feudal aristocracy, military leaders, big landowners, warriors derived their authority from the divinely ordained holy Roman Emperor. This was essential for legitimizing the power exercised by the members of the decentralized feudal state.

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[1] Amar Farooqui, 2002, "*Early Social Formations*" Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, p.416



St.Peter's Basilica in Rome

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Saint_Peter%27s_Basilica

2.1.3 Administration

Charlemagne was confronted with the problem of governing a vast empire without any centralized apparatus. He had to develop such an apparatus out of the institutions he had received in inheritance. Simultaneously he had to accommodate the interests of the feudal lords who exercised enormous political and economic power at the regional and local levels. Charlemagne organized the administration of his Empire on feudal lines. He considered himself as the owner of all lands. He divided his empire into 52 counties or administrative units and gave his to his trusted friends after taking the oath of loyalty. These tracts or divisions of land were known as counties, duchies and marches which were governed by regional governors known as 'Counts', 'Dukes' and 'Marquises' respectively. They enjoyed enormous autonomy in their areas. They were assigned revenue, judicial and military functions. The royal government at the local level was administered by the Counts who acted in the name of the king in a specific territory to administer justice, maintain army, collect revenues due to the king and maintain law and order.Efforts were made to improve the judicial administration at the local level by attaching individuals learned in the law, called *scabini*, to each court under the jurisdiction of the Count to assure judgments as per law. Counts were rewarded for their services by income from lands attached to their offices, charges made for public services performed, fines, and royal gifts.Bishops were assigned important political functions. The central government consisted of the king's personal entourage, called the *palatium* (palace), composed of trusted lay and ecclesiastical companions of the king who performed various functions. At all the levels of government, utmost attention was given to assuring a regular royal income from produce of royal estates, war booty, tolls, gifts etc.

During the reign of Charlemagne around 300 prominent lords administered the country. The Emperor held the general assembly annually in his capital at Aachen to which all members of the nobility attended. Haroun-al-Rashid, the great Caliph, sent his ambassador with a gift—an elephant—to the court of Charlemagne. The functioning of these feudal lords was monitored and reviewed through special imperial agents called as *missi dominici* (emissaries of the master). They also communicated the commands of the central government to the counts.

Since the fall of the Roman Empire, this was the first systematic effort to evolve a unified and effective government for a large political entity in Western Europe. The character of Frankish state in the 8th and 9th century can be ascertained by *capitularies* which were a series of written records of decisions or commands or instructions made by the Carolingian kings. Many of the *capitularies* are legislative in nature i.e. they interpret laws on different subjects. A few of them are guidelines for better governance while some other shoes the disapproval of the actions of certain officials. The *capitularies* indicates that Charlemagne attempted to create a uniform administrative and legal system for the diverse communities inhabiting his vast empire. However, despite the efforts made by Charlemagne, in the long run the situation was unfavorable for centralization.The state lacked resources required to maintain a large bureaucracy. There was no standing army. The Counts received land grants as remuneration for their services. Payment of salaries to government employees, collection of revenue, recruitment of soldiers and appointment of soldiers was not centralized. Under Charlemagne's successors the process of centralization was reversed since the feudal lords became very powerful.

During the process of re-organization of state, Charlemagne formally associated the church with the government. The higher officials of the church such as archbishops or bishops were assigned the responsibility of supervising the religious affairs of the areas under their control. In the provinces, the count was the supreme political authority while the Bishops was the supreme religious authority.Bishops continued to play an important role in local government also. Since the church had large landed estates, it could dominate the economy in some regions. During the period following the downfall of the Roman Empire the church was capable of handling the local administrative works.

2.1.4 Learning and Role of Church in its Revival

Historian Perry Anderson has highlighted the contribution made by the church in the development of culture, ideas and some of the institutions of early medieval Europe. The church preserved the achievements of Greco-Roman antiquity and transmitted them to the Carolingian era. Anderson believes that the church was a vital bridge between the two eras.

Charlemagne deliberately involved the church in its program for improving the standards of literacy and education in his empire. During the period of Germanic invasions the church was the main repository of knowledge as it possessed the necessary infrastructure for imparting education.

The revival of learning was probably the most outstanding contribution of the church in the early medieval period. Literacy had declined from the time of Germanic invasions. The people knew Greek and Latin languages, however, Latin was the language of the elite. The

people conversed in local languages outside Italy. The growth of the church was a significant factor in endorsing the Latinization of the West in the later Roman Empire. The disintegration of the government and the displacement of the Roman aristocracy in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries had an adverse impact on Latin learning. The Germanic invasions altered the linguistic character of Western Europe. A large section of the ruling class spoke Germanic languages. Greek was the principal language of the Byzantine ruling class.

Charlemagne had no time to read and write. In spite of this handicap, he became a great patron of learning. He attracted a number of great scholars to his court including Alcuin and Northumbria and Theodulf from Spain and caused the revival of learning. He opened a school in his palace for his own children and that of the nobles where the study of Greek and Latin was encouraged. He attached a school to every church of his empire where monks taught the children reading, writing and arithmetic.

Charlemagne enlarged this infrastructure by taking the initiative to establish state-run educational institutions in France and West Germany. He found it necessary to have institutions for educating a section of the population so as to be able to recruit literate administrative officials for carrying out the routine functions of the government. Records had to be maintained, accounts and letters had to be written and laws had to be promulgated. All this required a minimum level of literacy. As a result of the efforts of Church and the Frankish state there were signs of recovery in the 9th century. The society became relatively literate. However, the common people remained illiterate as Latin was the language of the church, of law, of higher learning and of official documents. It was not the language of the masses. According to March Bloch, the early medieval aristocracy and monarchy was quite backward from the education point of view.

2.2 Death and Succession

At the end of his reign Charlemagne succeeded in unifying all the Germans and all the Christians under one state and one church. Hemarried at four times and had three legitimate sons. During his lifetime he had nominated three of his sons as heirs to different parts of the empire.His empire had to be partitioned among his sons after his death. However, at the time of Charlemagne's death in 814 CE only the youngest of son, Louis I (814-840 CE), survived to succeed him. He was unable to govern his subjects effectively. Charlemagne also had numerous illegitimate children with his concubines. Family rivalry and powerful church combined to bring about chaos in the empire. Foreigners such as Arabs, Bretons, Normans and Vikings began to frequently attack his empire. The empire was divided into three parts according to the Treaty of Verdun in 843 CE.

The centralization done by Charlemagne proved to be temporary. The centralized structure started disintegrating by the middle of the 9th century. The Carolingian Empire broke up into numerous semi-independent territories which were governed by Dukes and Counts. Feudal institutions began to develop firm roots in Western Europe. The Carolingian Empire became extinct by 887 CE and was finally brought to an end in 987 CE by Hugh Capet, the Count of the reign of Paris who founded the Capetian Dynasty which ruled over France till 1328 CE.

Self-Check Exercise

1. When Charlemagne became the king of the Frankish Empire?
2. Who crowned Charlemagne as"Emperor of the Romans" on Christmas Day in 800 CE at Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome?
3. Who has been called as the Father of Europe?
4. Which was the largest and most powerful political entity in the Western Europe in the beginning of the 9th century?
5. Into how many counties did Charlemagne divided his empire?
6. What were the administrative units governed by regional governors known as?
7. Who were *missi dominici*?
8. What were *capitularies*?
9. When did Charlemagne die?
10. Who succeeded Charlemagne as the Carolingian Emperor?

2.3 Summary

- Charlemagne became the king of one portion of the Frankish empire after the death of Pippin III in 768 CE. He was one of the great kings of the Middle Ages.
- His early years were marked by a succession of events that had immense implications for the Frankish position in the contemporary world.
- The expanded Frankish state that Charlemagne founded is known as the Carolingian Empire. He vigorously expanded and defended his empire with his more than fifty major campaigns and established a new administrative structure for its governance.
- He defeated the Saxons, Lombards, Moors and a number of Germanic tribes and annexed them. He also overthrew the king of Bavaria and made it a part of his empire.
- His empire comprised France, present territories of Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, western Germany, Northern Italy and a small portion of Spain.
- Charlemagne has been called the "Father of Europe" as he united most of Western Europe for the first time since the classical era of the Roman Empire and united parts of Europe that had never been under Frankish or Roman rule.
- Charlemagne was conferred the title of Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III which cemented the ties between the Church and the Carolingian Empire.
- Charlemagne was confronted with the problem of governing a vast empire without any centralized apparatus. He divided his empire into 52 counties or administrative units and placed it under provincial governors known as Counts, Dukes and Marquises.
- Charlemagne issued capitularies which were a series of written records of decisions or instructions many of whom were legislative in nature.

- During the process of re-organization of state, Charlemagne formally associated the church with the government. The revival of learning was probably the most outstanding contribution of the church in the early medieval period.
- Charlemagne took the initiative to establish state-run educational institutions in France and West Germany. The society became relatively literate. However, the common people remained illiterate.

Charlemagne died in 814 CE and his son Louis I succeeded him. He was unable to govern his subjects effectively. The centralized structure created by Charlemagne started disintegrating by the middle of the 9th century.

2.4 Glossary

- **Basilica:** The term basilica refers to the function of a building as that of a meeting hall.
- **Bishop:** A person who supervises a number of local churches.
- **Canonize:** Declaration of a deceased person as an officially recognized saint.
- **Latin:** The language of ancient Rome and its empire, widely used historically as a language of scholarship and administration.

2.5 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. 768 CE
2. Pope Leo III
3. Charlemagne
4. Carolingian Empire
5. 52
6. Counts
7. In the Roman Empire, the functioning of feudal lords was monitored and reviewed through special imperial agents called as *missi dominici* (emissaries of the master).
8. They were a series of written records of decisions or commands or instructions made by the Carolingian kings.
9. 814 CE
10. Louis I

2.6 Suggested Readings

1. Barbero, Alessandro, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent*. Translated by Allan Cameron. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
2. Becher, Matthias, *Charlemagne*, Translated by Bachrach, David S. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
3. Cantor, Norman F, *Civilization of the Middle Ages: Completely Revised and Expanded Edition, A*. HarperCollins, 2005.
4. Collins, Roger, *Charlemagne*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

5. Davies, Norman, *Europe: A History*, Oxford University Press, 1996.
6. Painter, Sidney, *A History of the Middle Ages*: *284–1500*, New York: Knopf, 1953.

2.7 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the early life and campaigns of Charlemagne.
2. Give an account of the administrative system of Charlemagne.
3. How did the measures of Charlemagne and his successors bring about the growth of components of classical feudalism?
4. Assess the contribution of Charlemagne in the revival of literacy in the early medieval period. How did he involved church in his program of improving standards of literacy and education in his empire?
5. Show the extent of the Empire of Charlemagne on the map of Europe and locate the important towns and cities therein.

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CHPATER-3
CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

Structure:

3.0 Introduction

A revival of interest in classical learning in the Carolingian Empire (modern day France, Germany, part of Spain and Italy) was known as **Carolingian Renaissance**. Beginning under the patronage of King Charlemagne (768–814 CE), it occurred from the late 8^{th} century and continued to the end of the 9^{th}century. There was an expansion of literature, writing, jurisprudence, liturgical reforms, the arts, architecture and scriptural studies during this period.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Carolingian Renaissance,
- Examine the factors responsible for Carolingian Renaissance,
- Explain the academic labors done by Carolingian rulers,
- Analyze developments in the field of Latin pronunciation during the period of Carolingian Renaissance,
- Examine the development of art and architecture by the Carolingian rulers,
- Discuss the development of currency during the period of Carolingian Renaissance.

3.1 Carolingian Renaissance

Although there were developments in writing and architecture during the Merovingian period, Charlemagne (742-814 CE), King of the Franks and later Holy Roman Emperor, initiated a cultural revival known as the **Carolingian Renaissance** which was the first of the three medieval renaissances.It occurredfrom the late 8th century tothe 9thcentury. During this period, there was a surge in literature, writing, art, architecture, liturgical reforms, jurisprudence, and scriptural studies. According to Pierre Riche, the term Carolingian Renaissance does not mean that Western Europe was conservative before the Carolingian era. The 7th century witnessed the Isodorian Renaissance in the Visigothic Kingdom of Hispania.Carolingian Renaissance derived inspiration from Constantine's Christian Roman Empire of the 4th century. Constantine was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity and left behind an impressive legacy of military strength and artistic patronage.

Charlemagne styled himself as the new Constantine and started this revival by writing his *Admonitio generalis* (789 CE) and *Epistola de litteris colendis* (794-797 CE). In the *Admonitio generalis*, Charlemagne legislates church reform, which he believes will make his subjects more moral.In the *Epistola de litteris colendis*, a letter to Abbot Baugulf of Fulda, he outlines his intentions for cultural reform. Most importantly, he invited the greatest scholars from all over Europe to come to court and give advice for his renewal of politics, church, art and literature. Carolingian art survives in manuscripts, sculpture, architecture and other religious artifacts produced during the period 780-900 CE. These artists worked exclusively for the emperor, members of his court, and the bishops and abbots associated with the court. Geographically, the revival extended through present-day France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria.

A number of factors were responsible for this cultural expansion. The unification of Western Europe brought about by Charlemagne led to peace and stability, which set the stage for prosperity.Charlemagne found it necessary to have institutions for educating a section of the population so as to be able to recruit literate administrative officials for carrying out day-to-day functions of the government. Records had to be maintained, accounts and letters had to be written and laws had to be promulgated. All this required a minimum level of literacy. After the decline of the Western Roman Empire there was economic revival in Western Europe. Urban settlements developed in the late 7th century. The development of Carolingian economy was powered by the efficient organization and exploitation of labor on large estates which led to surplus production of grain, salt and wine. Towns expanded as a consequence of inter-regional trade. The Carolingian economy reached its zenith from 775 to 850 CE. Slave trade was one of the major causes of the sudden economic growth. The demand for slaves was created by the rise of Arab empires as the European slaves were particularly prized. Charlemagne's campaigns of Eastern Europe ensured a steady supply of slaves which were further exported to the Arab world. The slave market transformed the long-distance trade of the European economies.

3.1.1 Academic Labors

Carolingian rulers were confronted with the problem of the lack of Latin literacy in 8th century Western Europe. There were only a few people capable of serving as court clerks in societies where Latin was valued. A major concern for some rulers was the fact that not all parish priests possessed the skill to read the Vulgate Bible. Apart from this the unrefined Latin of the later Western Roman Empire had begun to diverge into the regional dialects, the precursors to today's Romance languages, that were becoming mutually incomprehensible and preventing the communication between scholars from different parts of Europe.

In order to overcome these problems, Charlemagne ordered the creation of schools in a *capitulary* known as the *Charter of Modern Thought* which was issued in 787 CE. It mainly aimed at attracting the leading scholars of the Christendom of his day to his court. Italians such asPeter of Pisa, Paulinus of Aquileia and Lombard Paul the Deaconwere the first to be called in his court.

Later on, the courts of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald had similar groups of scholars a number of whom were of Irish origin. Dicuil, the Irish monk, attended the former court, and the more famous Irishman John Scotus Eriugena attended the latter becoming head of the Palace School at Aachen.

Standardized curriculum was created for use at the recently established schools. Alcuin pioneered the writing of textbooks, creation of word lists, and establishing the trivium and quadrivium as the basis for education.

During this period there was the development of Carolingian minuscule, a "book-hand"that introduced the use of lower-case letters which were initially used at the monasteries of Corbie and Tours. A standardized version of Latin was also developed that permitted the coining of new words while following the grammatical rules of Classical Latin. This Medieval Latin became a common language of scholarship.

In the 9th century, Carolingian renaissance produced more than one lakh manuscripts. The earliest surviving copies of the works of Cicero, Horace, Martial, Statius, Lucretius, Terence, Julius Caesar, Boethius and Martianus Capella were produced by the Carolingians.

3.1.2 Latin Pronunciation

Roger Wright believes that the Carolingian Renaissance is responsible for the contemporary pronunciation of Ecclesiastical Latin. There was no conceptual distinction between Latin and Romance till that time. Latin was considered as the written form of Romance. However,non-native Latin speakers used a rather different pronunciation, probably attempting to sound out each word according to its spelling. In France, the Carolingian Renaissance introduced this artificial pronunciation for the first time to native speakers also. Thisfundamental change rendered Latin sermons completely incomprehensible to the general Romance-speaking public, which encouraged officials at the Council of Tours, to instruct priests to read sermons aloud in the old manner.

Since there was no definite way to indicate whether a given text was to be read aloud as Latin or Romance, and native Germanic speakers (such as church singers) in the empire might have struggled to read words in Latin orthography according to Romance orthoepy, efforts were made in France to develop a new orthography for the latter. As the Carolingian Reforms spread Latin pronunciation from France to other Romance-speaking regions, local scholars ultimately felt the need to develop distinct spelling systems for their own vernaculars as well, thereby commencing the literary phase of Medieval Romance. However, writing in Romance does not become widespread until the renaissance of the 12th century.

3.1.3 Carolingian Art

Carolingian art flourished between 800 to 900 CE during the reign of Charlemagne and his immediate heirs. The art work was done by and for the court and a group of important monasteries under the imperial patronage. France, Austria, Germany, Northern Italy were the major centers of art.

Illuminated manuscripts were the most numerous surviving works of art in the Carolingian renaissance. Numerous luxury manuscripts such as Gospel books have survived. Narrative images also existed. Luxury manuscripts were provided with treasure bindings or rich covers. It was in the Carolingian period that the *Chronography of 354* was copied.

The Carolingian manuscripts were produced by the clerics in their own style. They often have inscriptions. The surviving manuscripts have been assigned to workshops by the scholars. The Court School of Charlemagne (or Ada School) was the earliest workshop in the Carolingian era. It produced the earliest manuscripts such as the Godescalc Evangelistary, Lorsch Gospels, Ada Gospels etc. these manuscripts initiated a revival of Roman classicism.

Archbishop Ebo of Rheims transformed the Carolingian art. The Gospel book of Ebbo was painted in such a manner that it evoked an inspiration and energy which was not known in the classical Mediterranean forms. Another center of Carolingian art was the Diocese of Metz. A sacramentary known as the *Drogo Sacramentary* was made for Bishop Drogo.

The traditions of the first half continued in the second half of the 9th century. Numerous richly decorated Bibles were made for Charles the Bald who also established a Court School. Patronage for manuscripts declined after the death of Charles the Bald. However, some work continued for a while.

Luxury Carolingian manuscripts were planned to have treasure bindings i.e. ornate covers in precious metal with jewels around central carved ivory panels. The subjects were often narrative religious scenes.Some of the significant examples of goldsmith's work comprise the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels and the cover of the Codex Aureus of St.Emmeram. This workshop is associated with Charles the Bald and is called as the "**Palace School**".

Charlemagne revived big bronze casting by creating a foundry at Aachen which cast the doors for his palace chapel, in imitation of Roman designs. Golden Altar, a *paliotto*, in the Basilica of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan is one of the finest examples of Carolingian goldsmiths' work. The altars are decorated with images in gold and silver on four sides, framed by borders of filigree, precious stones and enamel.The 9th century Lothair Crystal is one of the largest group of engraved pieces of surviving rock crystal.

There was abundance of wall paintings in churches and palaces. Their subject matter was primarily religious. Mosaic installed in Charlemagne's palatine chapel exhibits an enthroned Christ. Charlemagne's Aachen palace has a wall painting of Liberal Arts and narrative scenes from his war in Spain. The palace of Louis and the Pious at Ingelheim has historical images from antiquity to the time of Charlemagne.

Spolia is the Latin word for "spoils" which refer to the taking or appropriation of ancient monumental or other art works for new uses or locations. The tale of an equestrian statuewas the most famous example of Carolingian spolia. In Rome, Charlemagne had witnessed the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Lateran Palace. It was the only surviving statue of a pre-Christian Roman Emperor. Charlemagne brought an equestrian statue from Ravenna, then believed to be that of Theodoric the Great, to Aachen, to match the statue of "Constantine" in Rome.

3.1.4 Carolingian Architecture

Carolingian architecture is the style of pre-Romanesque architecture belonging to the period of the Carolingian Renaissance of the late 8th and 9th centuries, when the Carolingian dynasty dominated West European politics. It attempted to emulate Roman architecture and borrowed a lot from Early Christian and Byzantine architecture, developing a unique character.

According to John Contreni, as a consequence of Carolingian Renaissance27 new cathedrals, 417 monastic buildings and 100 royal residences were constructed between 768 and 855 CE. 16 cathedrals, 232 monasteries and 65 palaces were built during the reign of Charlemagne. The kings funded these constructions. The rediscovery of the architecture treatises composed by Vitruvius enabled the building in stone. When the Carolingians visited Italy they discovered the Roman basilicas, the triumphal arches and the palatine chapels. The architects did not just copy the Roman style but rather adapted their plans to meet the requirements of the royal and religious ceremonies. A majority of the architectural elements invented at the beginning of the Carolingian period were refined over a long period of time and successively adapted to ultimately lead to the Romanesque architecture of the 11thcentury.

The first period of the Carolingian architecture, during the reign of Pepin the Short and the beginning of Charlemagne's reign, was driven by powerful ecclesiastic figures such as Bishop Chrodegang.The Pope desired to reorganise and standardise the Catholic church with the help of Charlemagne. Bishop Chrodegang introduced the Roman liturgical services which led tosignificant changes in the architecture. The orientation of the churches was such that the altar would be located at the eastern end while the entrance would be at the western end. Main references for the Carolingian designers were St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Between the years 780 and 790 CE, the construction of the Lorsch Abbey, the expansion of the Princely Abbey of Corvey, and the foundation of the Abbeys of Saint-Riquier and Fulda acquired prominence. The Palace of Aachen with its chapel was the jewel and the zenith of this period.

Architecture projects multiplied towards the end of Charlemange's reign. The Plan of Saint Gall, with its detailed instructions, is a significant example of how the architectural elements of a Christian monastery were defined during this period to establish a classic style.

The gatehouse of the monastery at Lorsch, built around 800 CE, exemplifies classical inspiration for Carolingian architecture, built as a triple-arched hall dominating the gateway, with the arched facade interspersed with attached classical columns and pilasters above.

Charlemagne commissioned the architect Odo of Metz to construct a palace and chapel in Aachen, Germany. The chapel was constructed between 792 and 805 CE and is known as the **Palatine Chapel**.It was inspired by the octagonal Justinian church of San Vitale in Ravenna, built in the 6th century, but at Aachen there is a tall monumental western entrance complex, as a whole called a westwork—a Carolingian innovation.This space served as the seat of Charlemagne's power and still houses his throne today.An original westwork survives today at the Abbey of Corvey, built in 885 CE.

In the 10th century the decline of the Carolingians started and it culminated in 1000–1020, when the Carolingian institutions collapsed in France while in Germany the new Ottonian dynasty developed the Ottonian architecture, which borrowed a number of elements from the Carolingian architecture. For example, around 1030 CE,Eglise Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul d'Ottmarsheim in Alsace was founded.

3.1.5 Carolingian Currency

Pepin the Short reformed the French currency around 755 CE. Many local systems were standardized, with minor mints being closed, royal control over the rest wasreinforced, and purity was also increased.He set up a system based on a new .940-fine silver penny weighing 1/240 of a pound in place of the gold Roman and Byzantine solidus. Since the debased solidus was at that time roughly equivalent to 11 of these pennies, the shilling was established at that value, making it 1/22 of the silver pound which was later adjusted to 12 and 1/20, respectively. However, during the Carolingian period, neither shillings nor pounds were minted, being instead used as notional units of account. Regardless of the purity and quality of the new penniesthey were frequently rejected by traders throughout the Carolingian period in favour of the gold coins used elsewhere. This situation resulted in repeated legislation against such refusal to accept the king's currency.

3.2 Impact of Carolingian Renaissance

The impacts of Carolingian Renaissance were mainly confined to a small group of well-educated people in the court who had interest in literature. John Contreni believes that the renaissance had a remarkable impact on culture and education in Francia, an arguable effect on the artistic activities and an inestimable effect on the moral regeneration of the society. Apart from their attempts to write better Latin, to copy and preserve patristic and classical texts and to develop a more legible script, the secular promoters of Carolingian renaissance applied rational ideas to the social issues, providing a common language and writing style that facilitated the communication throughout a large part of Europe.One of the most important impact of the Carolingian Renaissance was that Charlemagne encouraged the spread of uniform religious practices besides a uniform culture. Hebegan to construct a *respublica Christiana*, a Christian republic.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Which Frankish ruler is associated with Carolingian Renaissance?
2. What do you mean by Carolingian Renaissance?
3. Name the earliest art workshop in the Carolingian era.
4. What is *Spolia*?
5. Who introduced the Roman liturgical services which led to significant changes in the architecture?
6. Who was commissioned by Charlemagne for constructing a palace and chapel in Aachen, Germany
7. Why was the Carolingian Church of Saint Gall so important?
8. Which architectural plan did most Carolingian churches follow?
9. Who reformed the French currency around 755 CE?
10. Mention any one impact of Carolingian Renaissance.

3.3 Summary

- Charlemagne, King of the Franks and later Holy Roman Emperor, initiated a cultural revival known as the Carolingian Renaissance which was the first of the three medieval renaissances.
- It occurred from the late 8th century to the 9th century. During this period, there was a surge in literature, writing, art, architecture, liturgical reforms, jurisprudence, and scriptural studies.
- A number of factors were responsible for this cultural expansion such as unification of Western Europe, administrative requirements, economic revival of Western Europe etc.
- Carolingian rulers were confronted with the problem of the lack of Latin literacy in 8th century Western Europe. In order to overcome these problems, Charlemagne ordered the creation of schools in a *capitulary* which mainly aimed at attracting the leading scholars of the Christendom of his day to his court.
- Roger Wright believes that the Carolingian Renaissance is responsible for the contemporary pronunciation of Ecclesiastical Latin.
- Carolingian art flourished between 800 to 900 CE during the reign of Charlemagne and his immediate heirs.
- The art work was done by and for the court and a group of important monasteries under the imperial patronage. France, Austria, Germany, Northern Italy were the major centers of art.
- Carolingian architecture is the style of pre-Romanesque architecture belonging to the period of the Carolingian Renaissance of the late 8th and 9th centuries, when the Carolingian dynasty dominated West European politics.
- It attempted to emulate Roman architecture and borrowed a lot from Early Christian and Byzantine architecture, developing a unique character.

- The Carolingian kings brought about reforms in the currency. They restored the silver content of a penny that was already in circulation and was the direct descendant of the Roman *denarius.*
- The reform also reduced the number of mints, reinforced royal authority over the mints, and introduced uniform design of coins. All coins bore the ruler's name, initial, or title, which signified royal sanction of the quality of the coins.
- The impacts of Carolingian Renaissance were mainly confined to a small group of well-educated people in the court who had interest in literature.
- John Contreni believes that the renaissance had a remarkable impact on culture and education in Francia, an arguable effect on the artistic activities and an inestimable effect on the moral regeneration of the society.
- One of the most important impact of the Carolingian Renaissance was that Charlemagne encouraged the spread of uniform religious practices besides a uniform culture.

3.4 Glossary

- **Ecclesiastical:** Connected with or belonging to the Christian church.
- **Orthography:** The art of writing words with the proper letters according to standard usage.
- **Quadrivium:** A medieval university course comprising the 'mathematical arts' of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music.
- **Trivium:** An introductory course at a medieval university which involves the study of grammar, rhetoric and logic.

3.5 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Charlemagne
2. A period during the reign of Charlemagne and his successors that was marked by achievements in art, architecture, learning, and music.
3. The Court School of Charlemagne (or Ada School) was the earliest workshop in the Carolingian era.
4. *Spolia* is the Latin word for "spoils" which refer to the taking or appropriation of ancient monumental or other art works for new uses or locations.
5. Bishop Chrodegang
6. Architect Odo of Metz
7. Saint Gall was a combination of church and monastery. It was important because it became a training school for priests to improve literacy.
8. Basilican
9. Pepin the Short
10. Carolingian renaissance applied rational ideas to the social issues, providing a common language and writing style that facilitated the communication throughout a large part of Europe.

3.6 Suggested Readings

1. Collins, Roger, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1991.
2. Contreni, John G, "*The Carolingian Renaissance", Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 1984.
3. McKitterick, Rosamond,*Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.
4. Panofsky, Erwin,*Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, New York/Evanston: Harpers Torchbooks, 1969.
5. Scott, Martin, *Medieval Europe*, New York: Dorset Press, 1964.
6. Wright, Rogert, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France*, Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1982.

3.7 Terminal Questions

1. How did Charlemagne actually begin the process of reviving the culture of the Frankish empire?
2. Give an account of the factors responsible for Carolingian Renaissance.
3. Discuss the academic labors done during the period of Carolingian Renaissance.
4. Explain the development of Latin pronunciation in the Carolingian era.
5. What forms of art were produced during the Carolingian Renaissance?
6. Describe the development of architecture in the Carolingian period.
7. Write a note on the development of Carolingian currency.
8. What was the largest impact of Charlemagne's reign on the development of art and culture in Europe? Defend your answer using the assertion, reasoning, evidence method.



CHAPTER-4
CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND ITS DIVERSE MANIFESTATION

Structure:

4.0 Introduction

Religion in Medieval Europe (476-1500 CE) was dominated and informed by the Catholic Church. Most of the people practiced Christianity, and 'Christian' at that time meant 'Catholic as there was initially no other form of that religion.' No other institution wielded so much influence on the people of Medieval Europe as the Christian church. It performed the most wonderful work of preserving the past culture and worked to spread it. At a time when the people were troubled by constant invasions of the barbarians, the Christian church gave shelter and catered to the spiritual needs. The Catholic Church assumed an important role in the lives of the people for its many services rendered during the times of baptism, confirmation, confession and penance, marriage and the last rites performed before and after the death of a Christian. The church was the manifestation of God's will and presence on earth. The wealth possessed by the church in the form of lands and buildings, services of the educated clergy and its alliance with the state further increased the influence of the church. The authority of the church remained unquestioned for a couple of centuries. To revolt against the church was a very serious matter and even the kings feared to incur the wrath of the church.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to

- Understand the structure of the church and beliefs,
- Describe Monasticism in the Roman Catholic Church,
- Explain the role of the church daily lives of the people,
- Know about the corruption and heresy in church.
- Discuss the reformation movement.

4.1 Church Structure and Beliefs

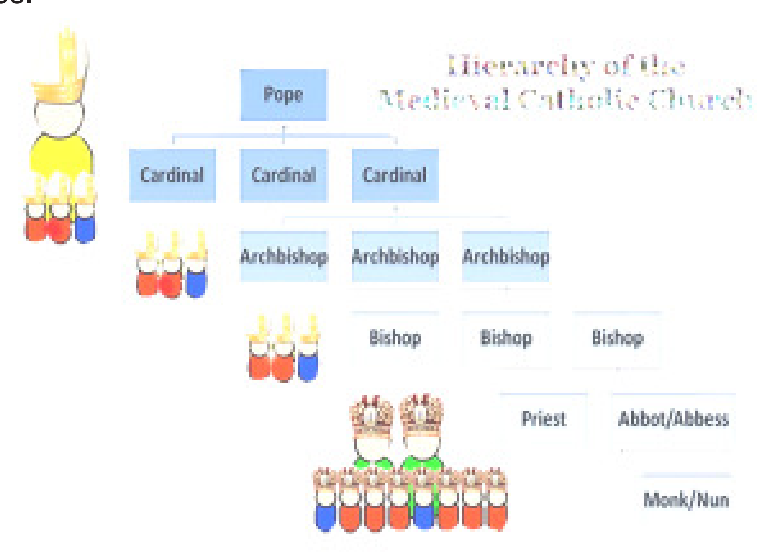
The Church claimed authority from God by means of Jesus Christ. According to the New Testament, Peter (original name Simon) was selected by Jesus Christ as his apostle. He was assigned the name *Cephas* (in Aramaic meaning rock or stone) i.e., “the rock upon which church will be built” to whom Jesus Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Roman Catholic tradition holds Peter as the first Pope upon who God had chosen to build His church.Peter was regarded as the head of the church, and all others were considered as his successors endowed with the same divine authority.

4.1.1 Structure of the Church

During the early medieval period, the Roman Catholic Church was organized into a distinct hierarchy of roles. The hierarchy consisted of the following roles ranked highest to lowest:

- Pope • Cardinals • Archbishops
- Bishops • Priests • Deacons

Each title had a salient function within the Roman Catholic Church. To ensure the smooth functioning of the church, there were checks and balances within the roles. Women were barred from all these titles.



Source:https://sites.google.com/site/kdiepdesignportfolio/chapter6/independentactivity

Pope: The Pope was the head of the Christian church in western Europe. He wielded great power because so many people belonged to the church. People saw the Pope as God's representative on earth. They had great political influence too. Pope's duty was to act as an arbiter in spiritual matters and official doctrines of the church. The official policies of the church and explanations of religious teachings were done by the medieval Pope in the form of written letters known as **Papal Bulls**. The medieval Pope also decided who to punish and when if they acted against the church and could also excommunicate people.

Cardinal: Immediately below the Pope in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church were the cardinals. The primary responsibility of a cardinal was to elect a new Pope in the event of his death. Apart from this they had many responsibilities. They were advisors to the Pope. They also administered the church.

Bishops/Archbishops: In the Catholic Church, the bishops and archbishops were ranked below the cardinals. They were ecclesiastical superiors over a cathedral or region. A bishop oversees a diocese and an archbishop administers an archdiocese.

Priests: During the Middle Ages, the priests provided care for the members of the community and held a prestigious role in society. They presided over baptisms and weddings and were generally the sole source of education. They were in charge of ensuring religious occasions and events. They also performed the final rites to the dying.

Deacon: Along with priests and bishops D*eacons* are members of the clergy.The deacon's ministry has three dimensions: liturgy, word and service. They assists the bishop and priests at the liturgy. At the Mass, the deacon proclaims the Gospel, may be invited to preach the homily, and assists at the altar. They may also baptize, witness and bless marriages, preside at the Liturgy of the Hours, and supervise at funeral liturgies among many other duties.

4.1.2 Beliefs of the Church

The Church believed that Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of the one true God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and that those works predicted the coming of Jesus Christ. The age of the earth and history of humanity was all revealed by means of scriptures which made up the Christian Bible which is considered to be the word of God and the oldest book in the world.

However, interpretation of the Biblewas not possible for an average person, and so the clergy was a spiritual necessity. In order to converse with God or understand the Bible correctly, one depended on one's priest as that priest was ordained by his superior who was, in turn, ordained by another, all under Pope's authority.

The hierarchy of the church maintained the social hierarchy. One was born into a particular class, followed the profession of one's parents, and died as they had. Church taught that it was God's will one had been born into a certain set of circumstances and endeavouring to improve one's lot was equivalent to claiming God had made a mistake. As a result, social mobility was rare.Therefore, the people accepted their lot and made the best of it.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who is regarded as the first Pope in the Roman Catholic tradition?
2. What were Papal Bulls?
3. What was the primary responsibility of Cardinal?
4. What do you understand by Deacon?

4.2 Monasticism

The way of life in monasteries and convents is called **monasticism**.Initially, the most important work of the Roman Catholic Church was to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ.Thebarbarians had to become civilised and Christian. The Christian monks played a very significant role in this mission. The monks resided in monasteries. They lived together away from the war and turmoil that was ravaging Europe at that time. They tried to fashion their lives on the lines established by St. Benedict. St. Benedict's believed that monks should take three vows, namely, to lead a lifeof chastity, poverty, and obedience. The Benedictine Rule also commanded the monks to elect one among them as an Abbot and love manual labour. The monks constructed a number of churches in Europe. St. Benedicthad founded a beautiful monastery in Monte Cassino (in southern Italy). He also encouraged monks to engage in social and intellectual work such as tending to the sick and the poor and teaching children at schools. Thus, in keeping with the Benedictine tradition, monks establishedschools and hospitals. They made copies of the Holy Bible and Greek and Latin classics. Some monks started writing. St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo (North Africa), wrote one of the most original works of the time titled *The City of God*. Following the monastic movement began by St.Benedict, there was the Cluniac movement with its head- quarters at Cluny in Burgundy. Its leading monk, Hildebrand, became the Pope-Pope Gregory VII. There were other orders of monks known as the Carthusian and Cistercian. They were known to have led a life of poverty and asceticism. The most famous of the Cistercian order was St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in France, who "encouraged mysticism and contemplation." During the 13thcentury two new kinds of wandering friars (monks)- Franciscans and Dominicans-travelled across Europe. The founders of these two orders were St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) and St. Dominic (1170-1221) respectively and both insisted their followers not to possess any property. Their chief mission was social work. They wandered, preached people in their native tongue, and uplifted the poor.



Ruins of the Medieval catholic Church of Arac

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
File:Ruins_of_the_medieval_Catholic_church_of_Ara%C4%8D.jpg

Monasteries catered to the intellectual needs of the medieval society. Monks were often the most learned scholars of the time, and the monastery libraries were the main protectors of the literature of ancient civilizations and the early church. A number of monasteries also ran schools. The monasteries became very rich with time. As an act of piety, a noble might leave his land to a monastery. Sometimes nobles gave money or land to monasteries to safeguard their own souls or the souls of relatives. Convents also benefited from the gifts of the pious, but there were only a few convents than monasteries, and the convents were not as rich. Monks and nuns often cared for the needy.

During the time of Crusades, some military orders of the knights—such as the Knight Templars, the Knight Hospitallers, and the Knights of the Teutonic Order-attached themselves to the cause of the church and attempted to liberate the holy places from Muslim control. Some of the monks took up missionary work at the instance of the Popes. St. Augustine undertook the mission work of converting the Anglo-Saxons in England. Earlier, St. Patrick had gone to Ireland to convert the Irish people to Christianity in 444 CE. Pope Gregory II sent St. Boniface toGermany to carry on his missionary work. He founded the Carolingian Church and became a martyr at Frisia in 754 CE.

Some monks left their monasteries to become missionaries, a practice that existed long before the time of Benedict. Saint Patrick of Ireland and Saint Augustine of England were among those who did important missionary work.

Self-Check Exercise

5. What is monasticism?
6. Mention the three vows that the monks should take according to St.Benedict.
7. Name the author of *The City of God*.

4.3 Church in Daily Life

During Middle Ages, the lives of the people revolved around the church. People, attended church daily for prayer and at least once a week for services, confession, and for repentance. The church was exempted from taxes and was supported by the people of a town or city. Like the present day national governments, the church in the Middle Ages had the power of taxation Citizens were responsible for supporting the parish priest and church overall by means of a tax called as*tithe*. Tithes were paid for baptism ceremonies, confirmations, and funerals in addition to saint's day festivals and holy day festivals such as Easter celebrations. In countries like England and Scandinavia the church collected a tax called '*Peter's Pence*'. Apart from this, the church received a lot of income from church-owned lands. At the peak of its power in the early 1200 CE, the church had become immensely wealthy.During the Middle Ages, the teachings of the church were a foregone conclusions and were unquestionable.A person was either in the church or out of it, and if out, one's relations with the rest of the community were limited. For example, Jewslived in their own regions surrounded by Christians and were not treated well.

The baptismal font wasthe centre of a worshiper's life in a small-town church or city cathedral. This was anunconnected stone receptacle/basin used for infant or adult baptism – often quite large and deep – which also aidedin determining a person's guilt or innocence when

one was charged with a crime. In order to clear one's name, a person would submit to an ordeal in which one was bound and dropped into the font. If the suspect floated, it was a clear sign of guilt; if the accused sank, it signified innocence.

There also existed an ordeal of iron in which the accused was forced to hold or carry a hot poker. If the person managed to hold the red-hot iron without burning and blistering their hands, they were innocent. However, there are no records of anyone being found innocent. Water ordeal was also performed by streams, rivers, and lakes. For example, women blamed for witchcraftwere often tied in a sack with their cat and thrown into water. If they managed to escape and come to the surface, they were found guilty and then executed, but they most often drowned.

Ordeals, such as executions, were a form of public entertainment and, as with festivals, marriages, and other events in community life, were paid for by the people's tithe to the church. As usual, the lower classbore the brunt of the Church's expenses but the nobility was also required to donate large sums to the church to book their seat in heaven.

The teachings of the church on purgatory generated massive wealth for various clergy who sold writs called as indulgences, promising a shorter stay in purgatory for a price. Another source of income were the relics, and it was common for corrupt clerics to sell fake splinters of Christ's cross, a vial of water from the Holy Land,a saint's finger or toe, or other objects, which would supposedly bring luck or ward off bad luck.

Self-Check Exercise

8. What is Peter's Penance?
9. What do you understand by baptismal font?

4.4 Corruption and Heresy

During the Middle Ages, the heretical sects were responses to the corruption and greed of the church. The enormous wealth of the church acquired through tithes and gifts, created a desire for even greater wealth which translated as power. An archbishop couldthreaten a noble, a town, or even a monastery with excommunication–by which one was exiled from the Church and so from the grace of God and commerce with fellow citizens–without any reason. Even renowned and devout religious figures were subject to 'discipline' along these lines for conflicting with the church superior.

The priests were extremely corrupt and, in many cases, illiterate parasites who only held their position due to family influence and favour. G. G Coulton mentions a letter of 1281 CE in which the writer cautionsabout the ignorance of the priests. Margery Kempe dared the wealthy clerics to reform their corruption while, almost 200 years before, Hildegard of Bingen had done the same as had men like John Wycliffe and Jan Hus. However, the church was not interested in reform because it did not permit anyone to question the basic principles that were the basis of Christianity.

Those who found the abuses of the Church too unbearable and were seeking an honest spiritual experience joined religious sects outside the church and attempted to live peacefully in their own communities. Among these, the Cathars of Southern France were best-known.They interacted with the neighbouring Catholic communities who had their own services, rituals, and belief system.

The church routinely condemned these types of communities. They were destroyed,their members massacred, and their properties were confiscated. Even an orthodox community which obeyed to Catholic teachings – like the Beguines – was condemned because it was begun spontaneously as a response to the requirements of the people and was not approved by the church and finally disbanded in 12th century CE. These types of groupsattempted to assert spiritual autonomy on the basis of scriptural authority of the Bible, without following the elaborate rituals of the church. The Cathars believed that Jesus Christ never died on the cross and was, therefore, never resurrected but that, instead, the son of God had been spiritually offered for the sins of humanity. They advocated for the feminine principle in the divine, revering a goddess of wisdom known as Sophia, to whom they devoted their lives.

Any deviation in people's attitudes toward religion threatened thesupremacy of the church, and the church possessed enough power to suppress such movements even in cases where sects such as the Cathars had substantial support and protection.

In order to eliminate heresy, the church ordered the Dominicans to search for heretics in the mid-1200s. During this search, known as the *inquisition*, any person suspected of heresy could be tried in secret and tortured in order to force a confession. Heretics who admitted that they had done wronghad to perform penance. The Inquisition criticized the heretics who did not confess and were referred to the civil government to be punished, sometimes by burning at the stake. The church believed that these severe penalties were essentialfor preventing the spread of heresy throughout Christendom.

Self-Check Exercise

10. Who were Cathars?

11. Define Inquisition.

4.5 Reformation

In the Middle Ages, it was unimaginable that there could be any valid belief system other than the Church. People considered heaven, hell, and purgatory as very real places, and one could not risk offending God by criticizing his church.Inthe 16th century a religious movement called as **reformation**, was started which aimedat reforming the Roman Catholic Church. It led to the establishment of Protestant churches.

The Protestant Reformation did not arise as an effort to overthrow the power of the church but began merely as yet another attempt to reform ecclesiastical abuse and corruption. A German priest and monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) moved from concern to outrage over the abuses of the church. In his 95 Theses (1517 CE), he opposed the sale of indulgences as a money-making exercise having no biblical authority and no spiritual worth. He also opposed the teachings of the church on a number of other matters.

In 1520 CE, Luther was condemned by Pope Leo X who demanded that Luther should renounce his criticism or face excommunication. When Luther refused to renounce, Pope Leo proceeded with the excommunication in 1521 CE, and Luther became an outlaw. Like his

predecessors, Luther was only stating the obvious in calling for an end to widespread abuse and corruption. He translated the Bible from Latin into the vernacular, opposed the notion of sacerdotalism and maintained that the Bible and prayer were all one needed to communicate directly with God. In asserting this, he not only undermined Pope's authority but rendered that position – in addition to those of the cardinals, bishops, archbishops, priests, and others – ineffectual and out-dated.



Martin Luther

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Martin_Luther#/media/File:Lucas_Cranach_I_-_Martin_Luther (1529),_St._Anna_in_Augsburg.jpg

Martin Luther believed that salvation was achieved by the grace of God, not by the good deeds of human beings, and so all of the works the church required of people were of no eternal use and only served to fill the church's treasury and build their grand cathedrals. Due to the prevalent political atmosphere in Germany, and Luther's own charm and intelligence, his attempt of reformation became the movement which would break the power of the church. Other reformers such as Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531 CE) and John Calvin (1509-1564 CE) opened new avenues in their own regions and many others emulated them.

Self-Check Exercise

12. What is Reformation?
13. Who was Martin Luther?

4.5 Summary

- No other institution wielded so much influence on the people of Medieval Europe as the Christian church.
- The Catholic Church assumed an important role in the lives of the people for its many services rendered during the times of baptism, confirmation, confession and penance, marriage and the last rites performed before and after the death of a Christian.
- The Church claimed authority from God by means of Jesus Christ. During the early medieval period, the Roman Catholic Church was organized into a distinct hierarchy of roles.
- The hierarchy consisted of the following roles ranked highest to lowest: Pope Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.
- The Church believed that Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of the one true God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and that those works predicted the coming of Jesus Christ.
- However, interpretation of the Bible was not possible for an average person, and so the clergy was a spiritual necessity. The hierarchy of the church maintained the social hierarchy.
- The way of life in monasteries and convents is called monasticism. Initially, the most important work of the Roman Catholic Church was to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- The Christian monks played a very significant role in this mission. The monks constructed a number of churches in Europe. Monasteries catered to the intellectual needs of the medieval society.
- During Middle Ages, the lives of the people revolved around the church. People, attended church daily for prayer and at least once a week for services, confession, and for repentance.
- The church levied taxes on the citizens in the form of tithe, Peter's Pence etc. Teachings of the church were a foregone conclusions and were unquestionable.
- During the Middle Ages, the heretical sects were responses to the corruption and greed of the church. The enormous wealth of the church acquired through tithes and gifts, created a desire for even greater wealth which translated as power.
- The priests were extremely corrupt and, in many cases, illiterate parasites who only held their position due to family influence and favour.
- In order to eliminate heresy, the church ordered the Dominicans to search for heretics in the mid-1200s. During this search, known as the *inquisition*, any person suspected of heresy could be tried in secret and tortured in order to force a confession.
- In the 16th century a religious movement called as reformation, was started which aimed at reforming the Roman Catholic Church. It led to the establishment of Protestant churches.Martin Luther of Germany initiated the Protestant Reformation.

4.6 Glossary

- **Beguines:** were laywomen who lived as nuns and served their community, holding all possessions in common and living a life of poverty and service to others.
- **Convent:**A convent is either a community of priests or the building used by the community, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Excommunication:**In Roman Catholic canon law, excommunication is a censure and thus a "medicinal penalty" intended to invite the person to change attitude that incurred the penalty, repent, and return to full communion.
- **Indulgences:** The redemption letters by which an individual could reduce the length and severity of punishment that heaven would require as payment for their sins, or so the church claimed.
- **Purgatory:** An afterlife kingdom between the heaven and hell where souls remained trapped until they had paid for their sins.
- **Sacerdotalism:** It is the belief in some Christian churches that priests the mediators between God and man.
- **Tithe:**In the Middle Ages, the Catholic church in Europe collected a tax of its own, separate from the kings' taxes, which was called a tithe.

4.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Peter
2. The official policies of the church and explanations of religious teachings were done by the medieval Pope in the form of written letters known as Papal Bulls.
3. The primary responsibility of a cardinal was to elect a new Pope in the event of his death.
4. A deacon is a member of the diaconate, an office in Christian churches that is generally associated with service of some kind, but which varies among theological and denominational traditions.
5. The way of life in monasteries and convents is called monasticism.
6. To lead a lifeof chastity, poverty, and obedience.
7. St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo
8. Peter's Pence are donations or payments made directly to the Holy See of the Catholic Church.
9. A baptismal font is an article of church furniture used for baptism and for determining a person's guilt or innocence when one was charged with crime.
10. Cathars was aheretical Christian sect that flourished in western Europe in the 12th and 13th century.
11. A judicial procedure and later an institution that was established by the papacy and, sometimes, by secular governments to combat heresy is called as inquisition.

12. A religious movement in the 16th century that aimed at reforming the Roman Catholic Church.
13. Martin Luther was a German monk who changed Christianity forever when he nailed his '95 Theses' to a church door in 1517 CE, triggering the Protestant Reformation Movement.

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4.9 Terminal Questions

1. Give an account of the church structure and beliefs in the medieval Europe.
2. Discuss monasticism in medieval Europe.
3. During the Middle Ages what was the role of church in the daily life of the people?
4. What do you know about the corruption and heresy in the medieval European church?
5. Write a short note on reformation movement.



CHAPTER-5
RISE OF PAPACY

Structure:

5.0 Introduction

The Papacy is the term for the office and the authority of the Pope of Rome.The Roman Catholic Church became really universal with several churches being established all over Europe. The bishops assisted by a number of priests served the spiritual needs of the community. In the course of time, the bishop of Rome claimed to be the leader of the Christendom. St.Peter was the first bishop of Rome who was “entrusted with the keys of heaven”.

With the fall of Rome, the church began to play the role of super-government in western Europe. This became evident when medieval Papacy was founded by Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 CE).The middle ages are characterized by the continued growth of the power of the Papacy and the growth of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire. Perhaps, the Papacy attained its height in the years 1073 – 1294 CE.

The Papacy was influenced by the temporal rulers of the surrounding Italian Peninsula. These periods are called as the Ostrogothic Papacy, Byzantine Papacy, and Frankish Papacy. Gradually the Papacy consolidated its territorial claims to a portion of the peninsula known as the Papal States. Subsequently, the role of neighbouring sovereigns was replaced by powerful Roman families during the *saeculum obscurum*, the Crescentii era, and the Tusculan Papacy.

The Papacy experienced increasing conflict with the leaders and churches of the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire) between 1048 and 1257 CE. Conflict with the latter concluded in the East–West split, dividing the church into western Church and Eastern Church. From 1257 to 1377 CE, the Pope, though the bishop of Rome, resided in Viterbo, Orvieto, and Perugia, and finally Avignon. The return of the Popes to Rome after the Avignon Papacy was followed by the Western Schism i.e., the division of the western church between two and, for a time, three competingPapal claimants.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain the rise of Ostrogothic Papacy,
- Understand the rise and growth of Byzantine Papacy,
- Know about the influence of the kings of Franks on Papacy,
- Determine the influence of powerful and corrupt aristocratic families on Papacy,
- Examine the conflicts of Papacy with the emperors and the east,
- Know about the wandering Popes,
- Comprehend the Avignon Papacy,
- Understand Western Schism.

5.1 Ostrogothic Papacy

The period of Ostrogothic Papacy ran from 493 to 537 CE where the Papacy was very much influenced by the Ostrogothic kingdom. Simplicius (468-483 CE) was the Pope who witnessed the ultimate overthrow of the Roman Empire. The Papal election of March 483 CE was the first to occur without the existence of a Western Roman emperor. Although the Pope was not out rightly appointed by the Ostrogothic king, the Papacy was strongly influenced by the Ostrogothic Kingdom. During this period the selection and administration of Popes was strongly influenced by Theodoric the Great and his successors Athalaric and Theodahad.

The contribution of the Ostrogoths became evident in the first schism, when, on November 22, 498 CE, two men were elected Pope. The subsequent triumph of Pope Symmachus (498–514 CE) over Antipope Laurentius is the first recorded example of simony in the history of Papacy. Symmachus also introduced the system of Popes naming their own successors, which held until an unpopular choice was made in 530 CE, and discord continued until the selection of John II in 532 CE. He was the first to rename himself upon succession.

Theodoric was lenient towards the Catholic Church and did not meddle into dogmatic affairs. He remained as neutral as possible towards the Pope, though he exercised a greater influence in the Papal affairs. The influence of Ostrogoths ended when Justinian I retook Rome by Gothic War.Justinian's commander Belisarius deposed pro-Gothic Pope Silverius (536–537 CE) deposed and replaced Pope Vigilius (537-555 CE) with his own choice.

5.2 Byzantine Papacy

The Byzantine Papacy was a period of domination of the Roman Papacy from 537 to 752 CE, when the approval of Byzantine Emperors was required for episcopal consecration, and many Popes were selected from the *apocrisiarii* (liaisons from the Pope to the emperor) or the inhabitants of Byzantine Greece, Syria, or Sicily. Emperor Justinian I reinstated the Roman imperial rule in the Italian peninsula after the Gothic War (535–54 CE) and appointed the next three Popes, a practice which was continued by his successors.

ExceptPope Martin I, no other Pope during this period challenged the authority of the Byzantine Emperor to confirm the election of the bishop of Rome before consecration. However, there were theological conflicts on issues such as monotheletism and iconoclasm between Pope and emperor. Greek speakers from Greece, Syria, and Byzantine Sicily substituted members of the powerful Roman nobles from Italian descent in the Papal chair during this period. Under the Greek PopesRome constituted a “melting pot” of Western and Eastern Christian traditions, reflected in art along with liturgy.

Pope Gregory I (540–604 CE) was the chief figure in proclaiming Papal primacy and provided stimulus to missionary activity in northern Europe, including England. He was elected as the Pope when Rome was attacked by the Lombards, and the law and order situation there had become bad. Using his position and office he restored law and order in Rome and showed his ability in matters such as administration and diplomacy. He founded the Papal authority over temporal affairs and sent missionaries to Britain and Germany for spreading Christianity.



Pope Gregory I

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Gregory_I_illustration.jpg

The Duchy of Rome was a Byzantine district in the Exarchate of Ravenna, ruled by an imperial official with the title dux. Within the exarchate, the two main districts were the country about Ravenna where the exarch was the centre of Byzantine hostility towards the Lombards, and the Duchy of Rome, which comprised the lands of Latium north of the Tiber and of Campania to the south as far as the Garigliano. Pope himself was the soul of the opposition there.

Pains were taken to hold control of the intervening districts and with them communication over the Apennine mountains. In 728 CE, the Lombard King Liutprand took the Castle of Sutri, on the road to Perugia, but restored it to Pope Gregory II "as a gift to the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul". The Popes continued to acknowledge the imperial Government.

The Lombard duke Transamund of Spoleto captured the Castle of Gallese in 738 CE, which protected the road to Perugia. By a large payment, Pope Gregory III persuaded the duke to restore the castle to him.

5.3 Frankish Papacy

Aistulf, king of the Lombards, captured Ravenna and threatened Rome in 751 CE. In reaction to this threat, Pope Stephen II visited the Frankish king, Pepin III, to look for his help against the attacking Lombards. The Papal elections were marked by battles between different secular and ecclesiastical divisions frequently entwined in the power politics of Italy.

The Pope consecrated Pepin at the abbey of St Denis, near Paris, together with Pepin's two young sons Charles and Carloman. Pepin invaded northern Italy in 754 CE, and again in 756 CE. He managed to drive the Lombards out from the territory belonging to Ravenna but he did not return it to its rightful owner, the Byzantine emperor. In its place, he handed over largeparts of central Italy to the Pope and his successors.

The land granted to Pope Stephen in 756 CE made the Papacy a temporal power and for the first time created an incentive for secular leaders to interfere with Papal succession. This territory would become the foundation for the Papal States, over which the Popes ruled until the Papal States were incorporated into the new Kingdom of Italy in 1870. The story of Rome would be almost synonymous with the story of the Papacyfor the next eleven centuries.

After being physically assaulted by his enemies in the streets of Rome, Pope Leo III made his way in 799 CE through the Alps to visit Charlemagne at Paderborn. What transpired between the two is not known, but Charlemagne travelled to Rome in 800 CE in Pope's support. Leo was supposed to anoint Charlemagne's son as his heirin a ceremony in St Peter's Basilica, on Christmas Day, however, unexpectedly, as Charlemagne rose from prayer, the Pope placed a crown on his head and acclaimed him emperor. Charlemagne expressed displeasure but nevertheless accepted the honour.

Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's successor, interfered in the Papal election by supporting the claim of Pope Eugene II; the Popes from this time were obligatory to swear loyalty to the Frankish Emperor. The people were made to swear loyalty to the Frankish Emperor and the anointment of the Pope could be performed only in the presence of the Emperor's representatives. The consecration of Pope Gregory IV (827-844 CE), chosen by the Roman nobles, was delayed for six

months to obtain theacceptance of Louis. Pope Sergius II (844-847 CE), choice of the Roman nobility, was consecrated without reference to Emperor Lothaire. The latter sent his son Louis with an army, and only when Sergius succeeded in appeasing Louis, whom he crowned king did Lothaire side with Sergius II.

5.4 Influence of Powerful Roman families

During the last years of the 9thcentury upto the middle of the 10thcentury a new kind of power appeared when the family of Theophylact, the Count of Tusculum, rose to prominence. This period (904 to 963 CE) was known as *Saeculum Obscurum* (Latin for 'the dark age').In his *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Italian historian Caesar Baronius in the 16th century identified *Saeculum Obscurum* as a period of Papal immortality. This era is regarded as one of the lowest points of the history of the Papal office. It is considered as the time when corruption, murder, and lust dominated the Papacy. It was also the time of decline of Papacy. It was followed by the supremacy of the powerful and notorious Roman women of the same family, namely the Count of Tusculum's wife Theodora, and her daughters, Marozia and Theodora. They had considerable influence over the Papacy and religious affairs by means of conspiracies, marriages and affairs. In the 19th century, the protestant German theologians coined the terms "*pornocracy*" (German: *Pornokratie*, from Greek *pornokratiâ*, "rule of prostitutes"), *hetaerocracy* ("*government of mistresses*") and the Rule of the Harlots (German: *Hurenregiment*).Historian Will Durant refers to the period from 867 to 1049 CE as the "*Nadir of the Papacy*".

5.5 Conflicts with the Emperor and East

The Imperial crown which wasat one time held by the Carolingian emperors was disputed between their fractured heirs and local overlords; none emerged victorious until Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor conquered Italy. In 962 CE, Italy became a constituent kingdom of the Holy Roman Empire. As emperors strengthened their position, northern Italian city-states were divided by Guelphs and Ghibellines. When Henry III, the Holy Roman Emperor, visited Rome in 1048 CE, he found three rival Popes because of the unusual actions of Pope Benedict IX. He removed all three and installed Pope Clement II, his own favoured candidate.

From 1048 to 1257 CE, the history of the Papacywas marked by conflict between Popes and the Holy Roman Emperor, most prominently the **investiture conflict**. The Pope became the central figure in the dispute over the appointment of bishops and other church officials.Pope Gregory VII prohibited the appointment of bishops by the kings and emperors and claimed himself to be the supreme arbiter over temporal and moral disputes. The Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV became angry and announced the deposition of Pope Gregory who retaliated by declaring that Henry IV was no longer the emperor and excommunicated him. The rift ended in the humiliation of Emperor Henry IV. When he went to Canossa for seeking Pope's pardon, the Pope made him wait for three days in the cold outside his castle. After receiving the pardon, the emperor regained his power and position. Then he turned his wrath on the Pope and made him flee from Rome.



Investiture Conflict

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Investiture_controversy#/media/File:Omer_et_le_Roi_Dagobert.jpg

Traditional divisions between East and West also came to climax in the East–West Schism and the Crusades. The first seven Ecumenical Councils were attended by both Western and Eastern bishops, but rising doctrinal, theological, linguistic, political and geographic differences finally resulted in mutual condemnations and excommunications. In November 1096 CE, a Council at Clermont was convened by Pope Urban II (1088–99 CE) with the objective of reunion and lending support to the Byzantines who wanted to regain their lands lost to the Seljuk Turks. Pope Urban II gave a rousing speech to a massive crowd in the council when he stressed the duty of the Christian West to march to the rescue of the Christian East.His speech became the acclamation of the First Crusade.

During this period the process for Papal selection became somewhat fixed unlike the previous millennium. In 1059 CE, Pope Nicholas II propagated *In nomine Domini* , which restricted suffrage in Papal elections to the College of Cardinals. It was during this period that the rules and procedures of Papal elections evolved, laying the basis for the modern Papal conclave. Cardinal Hildebrand, who later became Gregory VII was the driving force behind these reforms.

5.6 The Wandering Popes

The Pope is regarded as the bishop of Rome. However, nowhere it is mentioned that he has to stay there. Two centuries back, cardinals were required to stay in Rome. As a result of political instability in Italy in the 13th century, the Papal court was forced to move to numerous different locations such as Viterbo, Orvieto, and Perugia. The Popes brought with them the Roman Curia, and the College of Cardinals met in the city where the last Pope had died to conduct Papal elections. It enhanced the prestige of the host cities and provided itcertain economic advantages.The municipal authorities, however, risked being incorporated into the administration of the Papal States if they allowed the Pope to overstay his welcome.

Eamon Duffy believes thatthe aristocratic groupsin Rome once again made it an insecure base for a stable Papal government. Innocent IV was exiled from Rome and even from Italy for six years, and all but two of the Papal elections of the 13thcentury had to take place outside the city of Rome. The horizon of Rome itself was now dominated by the fortified war-towers of the aristocracy and the Popes increasingly spent their time in the Papal palaces at Viterbo and Orvieto.

5.7 Avignon Papacy

The Avignon Papacywas the period from 1309 to 1377 CE during which seven successive Popes, all French, took up residence in Avignon (France) rather than in Rome. These were—Pope Clement V (1305–14CE), Pope John XXII (1316–34 CE), Pope Benedict XII (1334–42CE), Pope Clement VI (1342–52 CE), Pope Innocent VI (1352–62 CE), Pope Urban V (1362–70 CE) and Pope Gregory XI (1370–78 CE). The Papacy was controlled by the French King during this period.

The situation arose for many reasons that were partly historical, partly personal and partly political. There was a conflict between the Papacy and the French crown, which led to the death of Pope Boniface VIII. After death of Pope Benedict XI, Philip forced a deadlocked council to elect Clement V of France as Pope in 1305 CE. However, Clement declined to shift to Rome, and in 1309 CE he moved his court to the Papal enclave at Avignon, where it persisted for the next 67 years. This absence of Papacy from Rome is referred by Martin Luther and other reformers as the "*Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy*".The term "*Babylonian Captivity*" refers back to a sad time in Jewish history when the Jews spent 70 years in exile in Babylon.

Pope Gregory XI abandoned Avignon in 1376 CE and moved his court to Rome and arrived on January 17, 1377 CE.In 1378 CE, Pope Gregory XI moved the Papal residence back to Rome.However, following Gregory's death, worsening relations between his successor Urban VI and a group of cardinals gave rise to the Western Schism. This initiated a second line of Avignon Popes, which were later regarded as illegitimate. The last Avignon antipope, Benedict XIII, lost most of his support in 1398 CE, including that of France; after five years besieged by the French, he fled to Perpignan in 1403 CE.



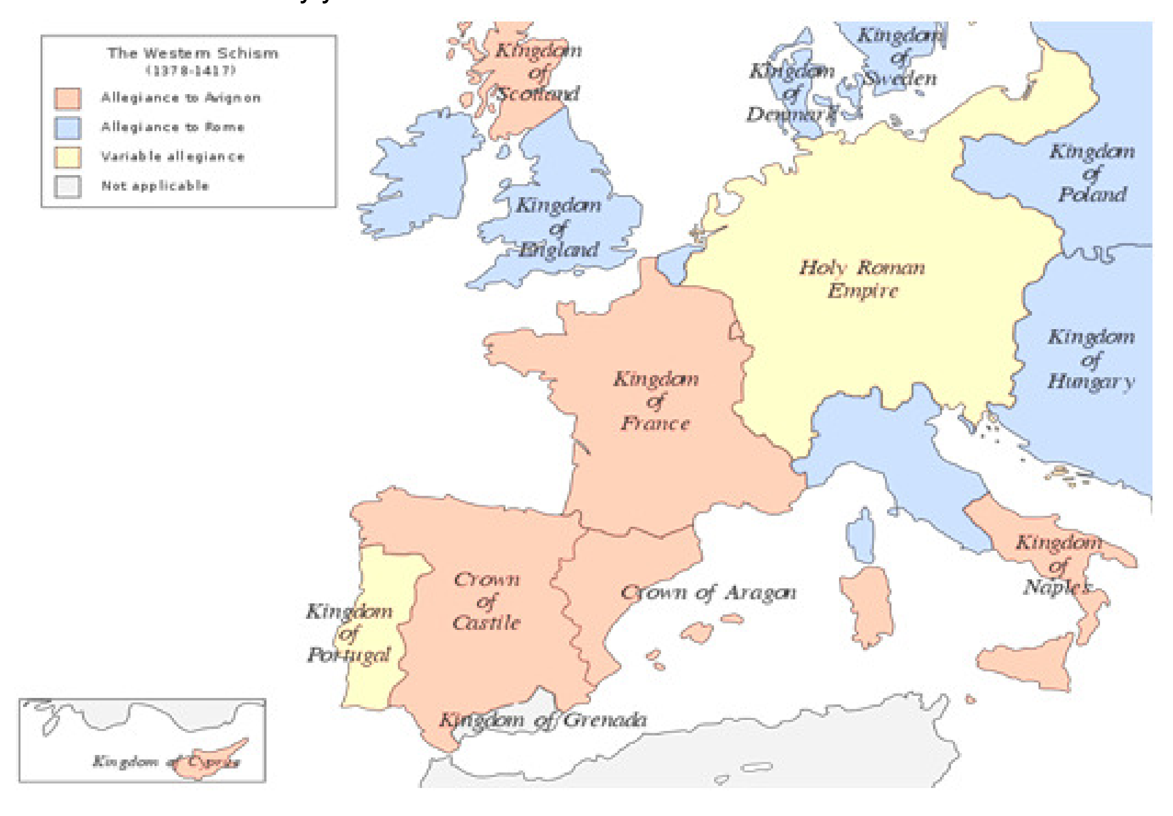
Pope Gregory XI

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Gregory_XI.jpg

5.8 Western Schism

The *Western Schism*, also referred to as the *Papal Schism*, the *Vatican Standoff*, the *Great Occidental Schism*, or the *Schism of 1378* or *The Great controversy of the Antipopes* or *The Second Great Schism*, was a split within the Catholic Church that lasted from 1378 to 1417 CE.During this period the bishops residing in Rome and Avignon both claimed to be the true Pope, and were joined by a third line of Pisan Popes in 1409. The schism was motivated by personalities and political allegiances, with the Avignon Papacy being closely related with the French monarchy. These challenging claims to the Papal throne undermined the prestige of the office.

The Papacy had resided in Avignon since 1309 CE, but Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome in 1377 CE. The Catholic Church, however, split in 1378 CE when after Pope Gregory's death the College of Cardinals elected both Urban VI and Clement VII as Pope. After a lot of efforts for settlement, the Council of Pisa (1409 CE), Italy declared both the Popes as illegitimate and elected another anti-Pope. To resolve the division within the church, the Pisan Pope John XXIII called a Church Council in the Swiss city of Constance (1414–1418 CE). The Council deposed both the Roman Pope Gregory XII and the Pisan Pope John XXIII, excommunicated the Avignon Pope Benedict XIII, and elected Martin V as the new Pope reigning from Rome. His election ended a thirty year schism in the church.



Western Schism

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Western_schism_1378-1417.svg

Self-Check Exercise

1. What was the era of Ostrogothic Papacy?
2. Which is the first recorded example of simony in the history of Papacy?
3. Why was Rome considered as the melting pot under the Greek Popes?
4. Who was the chief figure in proclaiming Papal primacy and provided stimulus to missionary activity in northern Europe, including England?
5. Which Frankish king helped Pope Stephen II to drive the Lombards out from the territory belonging to Ravenna?
6. What is *Saeculum Obscurum*?
7. Name the historian who have called the period from 867 to 1049 CE as the "*Nadir of Papacy*".
8. What was investiture conflict?
9. Who convened the Council at Clermont in 1096 CE?
10. What was the duration of Avignon Papacy?
11. What do you understand by "*Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy*"?
12. Define Western Schism.

5.9 Summary

- The office and the authority of the Pope of Rome is called Papacy. Pope Gregory the Great founded the medieval Papacy. The Papacy gained its height in the years 1073-1294 CE.
- The Papacy was influenced by the Italian rulers and these periods were known as the Ostrogothic Papacy, Byzantine Papacy, and Frankish Papacy. They gradually consolidated their claims in the Papal States.
- However, the role of neighbouring rulers was replaced by powerful Roman families such as the Theophylact family. The period from 904 to 963 CE was known as *Saeculum Obscurum* (Latin for 'the dark age').
- Between 1048 and 1257 CE, there was increase in conflict between the Papacy and the leaders and churches of the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire leading to the East-West split in the church.
- The Avignon Papacy was the period from 1309 to 1377 CE during which seven successive Popes, all French, took up residence in Avignon (France) rather than in Rome.
- This absence of Papacy from Rome is referred by Martin Luther and other reformers as the "*Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy*".
- Pope Gregory XI abandoned Avignon in 1376 CE and moved his court to Rome and arrived on January 17, 1377 CE. In 1378 CE, Pope Gregory XI moved the Papal residence back to Rome.
- The Western Schism was a prolonged period of crisis in Latin Christendom from 1378 to 1416 CE, when there was conflict regarding the rightful holder of the Papacy.

- The election of Martin V as the new Pope reigning from Rome ended a thirty year schism in the church.

5.10 Glossary

- **Curia:** A curia is an official body that governs a particular church in the Catholic Church.
- **Ecumenical council:** Also called general council, it is a meeting of bishops and other church authorities to consider and rule on questions of Christian doctrine, administration, discipline, and other matters.
- **Exarchate:**Any territorial jurisdiction whose ruler is described as an exarch.
- **Monotheletism:** It is a theological doctrine in Christianity, which holds Christ as having only one will.
- **Nadir:** The lowest or most unsuccessful point in a situation.
- **Simony:** It is the act of buying or selling of ecclesiastical privileges, for example pardons or benefices.

5.11 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. 493 to 537 CE
2. The triumph of Pope Symmachus over Antipope Laurentius.
3. In Rome many of the traditions of the east and the west were flowing together to create a vibrant solemn religious culture.
4. Pope Gregory I
5. Pepin III
6. It was a period in the history of the Papacy during the first two-thirds of the 10th century during which the Popes were influenced strongly by a powerful and allegedly corrupt aristocratic family, the Theophylacti, and their relatives and allies.
7. Will Durant
8. The investiture conflict, also called investiture controversy, was a conflict between the church and the state in medieval Europe over the ability to choose and install bishops and abbots of monasteries and the Pope himself.
9. Pope Urban II
10. 1309 to 1377 CE
11. The Avignon Papacy, also known as the *Babylonian Captivity*, was the period from 1309 to 1377 CE during which seven successive Popes resided in Avignon (France) rather than in Rome. It refers back to a sad time in Jewish history when the Jews spent 70 years in exile in Babylon.
12. The Western Schism was a prolonged period of crisis in Latin Christendom from 1378 to 1416 CE, when there was conflict regarding the rightful holder of the Papacy.

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5.12 Terminal Questions

1. Write in brief about the rise of Ostrogothic Papacy.
2. Discuss the rise and growth of Byzantine Papacy.
3. What do you know about the Frankish Papacy?
4. How was the medieval Papacy influenced by the powerful Roman families?
5. Give a brief account of the conflict between the Popes and the Holy Roman Emperors.
6. Write a short note on Avignon Papacy.
7. Give an account of Western Schism.



UNIT-II

CHAPTER-6

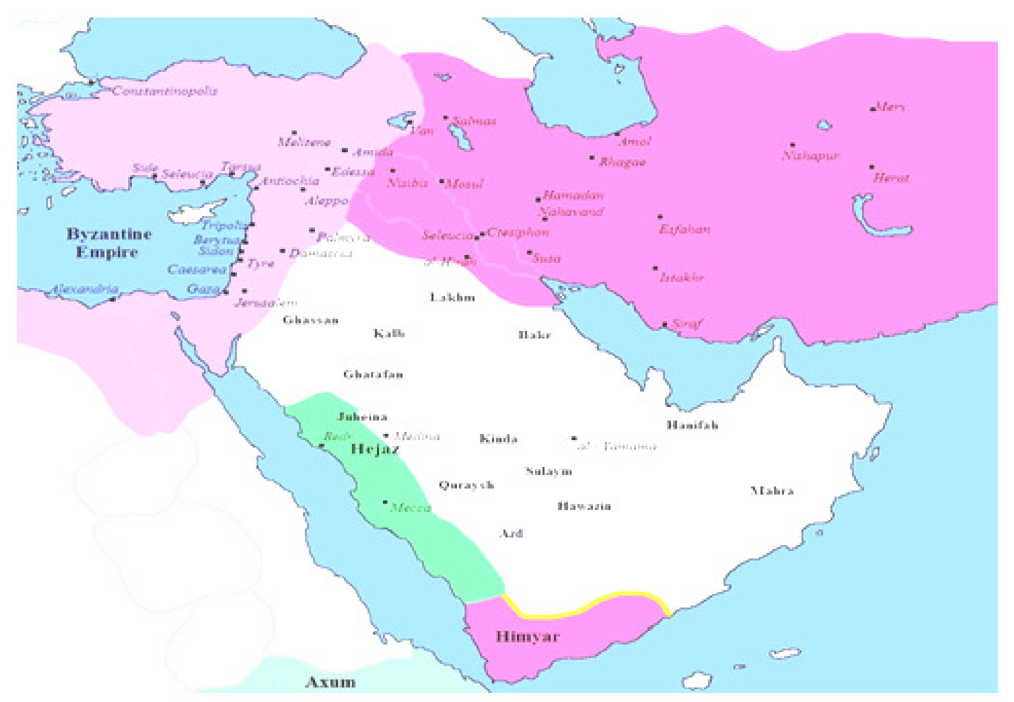
PRE-ISLAMIC TRIBAL SOCIETY IN ARABIA

Structure

6.0 Introduction

Pre-Islamic Arabia is the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam.Arabia is a large peninsula. It is known as *jazirat al-arab* (the island of the Arabs) in Arabian language. It is surrounded by the Red Sea in the West, the Persian Gulf in the East and the Arabian Sea in the South. Modern states of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen and Saudi

Arabia are located in this peninsula. Most of the peninsula is either desert or dry steppe.Rainfall is scanty in this area mainly confined to the coastal areas. Brief spells of rainfall occur in winters and in the spring. There are no perennial rivers in Arabia. However, there are many oases formed by springs and wells which was the lifeline of the people inhabiting these harsh conditions. Nomadic pastoralists inhabited this region and called themselves Arabs. The inhabitants of the Central, Northern and Western Arabia had led a nomadic existence for many centuries. The domestication and introduction of the camel helped the evolution of a particular type of pastoral nomadism which was based on rearing of camel. The camel pastoralists, known as **Bedouin**(from *bdu* or nomad) moved oases to oases with their animals. The Arabs were divided into tribes and no state formation occurred prior to the advent of Islam in the region. The tribes were composed of various clans. The Arabs were heavily dependent on the camel for mobility along with conducting trade, cultivation of some food grains, and on the date palm as a source of food and means of livelihood.



Pre-Islamic Arabia

Source:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Pre_Islamic_Arabia.PNG

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Know about various tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia,
- Understand the religions and rituals of pre-Islamic tribes of Mecca and Medina,
- Discuss trade during pre-Islamic Arabia,
- Analyze the political, social and economic conditions in the pre-Islamic Arabia,
- Describe the development of literature in pre-Islamic Arabia.

6.1 Tribes in Arabia

The people residing in Arabian Peninsula were known as Sarakenoi in Greek. They were called Saraceni in Latin and they had previously been called Scenite Arabs or the Arabs who dwell in tents. However, nomads of Arabia preferred to call themselves simply Arabs. However, the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula was full of tribal and religious diversities.

6.1.1 Dominant Tribes

Towards the end of the 5th century Mecca came under the control of a person named Qusayy who belonged to the Quraysh tribe. This tribe was an alliance of various tribal groups engaged in trade. It became a leading tribal confederacy. The Quraysh were a united religious cult. They administered Mecca through a council of clans called *mala*. The Quraysh defined their identity on the basis of codes of diet, dress, domestic taboos, and endogamous marriages within the Quraysh confederation. They were active in local fairs and regional trade. There was a high degree of internal unity within the Quraysh tribe. The Quraysh invested in agriculture in addition to trade and business. They entered into alliance with some neighbouring tribes such as the Thaqif which was a dominant tribe in the town of Taif located near Mecca.In this town where fruits and grains were grown and supplied to the rest of Arabia. Before the advent of Islam, theQuraysh entrepreneurs developed large estates in the valleys of Taif. According to **MaximeRodinson**, "*the history of the ensuing five hundred years may be seen in the light of the expansion of this one tribe to the dimensions of a world power*".[1]

Aws and *Khazraj* were the most prominent Arab tribesfrom Yemen, who migrated toMedina long before the advent of Islam. When they came to settle in Medina, their position in comparison to the three Jewish tribes-Banu Nadir, BanuQainuqa and BanuQurayza- was weak. Gradually, they gained strength, built fortresses and planted date orchards. Later on these two tribes came to be known under Islam as *al-ansar* or the helpers.

6.1.2 Religious Diversity

Before the advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula most Bedouin tribes practiced polytheism, mostly in the form of animism. Idolatry and Totemism were also common religious practices in the pre-Islamic Arabia. Apart from Bedouin, many other religious groups were settled there.

Major Jewish settlements were Khaybar and Medina in Northern Arabia. In Medina the Jewish tribes were rich in land, fortresses and weapons. Christianity spread to Arabia after Constantine conquered Byzantium in 324 CE and it was established in northern Arabia in the fifth century. Judaism was established in the fourth and fifth centuries in southern Arabia. Arabia was invaded by the Abyssinians who left Christian settlements in the small oases of Yemen.

Christian Churches were also active in eastern Arabia. Christianity was also spread by merchants who travelled in Arabian caravans from Najran in Arabia to Busra in Syria. There were Christian and Jewish settlers even in the central part of western Arabia known as **Hijaz** (Hejaz),

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[1]Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formations*, New Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd, Second Revised Edition, p.325

Judaism was prevalent in the oases of the Hijaz, where the Jews had greatly increased the area of land under cultivation and made numerous palm plantations. A few Arab families had converted to Judaism.

Medina consisted of a large number of Jews. Many nomadic tribes had been converted to Christianity and Judaism. In Medina the Jews were spread in both the region of Lower Medina or Safila in the north as well as Upper Medina or Aliya in the south. Qurayza and Nadir tribes of the Jewslived in the Upper Medina, while a third large tribe, the Qaynuqainhabited the Safila. The Nadir tribe, however, owned estates outside Aliya and on its peripheries as well. Several names, religious terms and historical references also show Iraqi Aramaic impacts in pre-Islamic Arabia. Syrian and Iraqi holy saints and ascetics were worshipped in the border regions of northern Arabia.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Write a note on dominant tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia.
2. Discuss briefly the religious diversity in the Arabian Peninsula in pre-Islamic times.
3. Name the two most dominant tribes in Medina.

6.2 Religion and Rituals of Pre-Islamic Arabian Tribes

The pre-Islamic tribes of Mecca and Medina largely practiced idolatry. However, there were differences in the religious traditions of the people of Mecca and Medina.

6.2.1 Tribes in Mecca

Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs were idol worshippers. They practised polytheism, i.e. they believed in the existence of many gods, but they also believed in one supreme God known as Allah whose house was in the *Kaaba*. Allah was considered to be the supreme God who is supposed to have exercised his power over all other tribal deities. The people of Mecca worshipped idols and created idols of every shape and size. Household idol was the most common deity. Hubal was the great God of Mecca.

The most predominant ritual which helped in maintaining unity among the tribes of Mecca was the pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to the House of Allah or *Kaaba* (Arabic for cube), a rectangular structure. The *Kaaba* consisted of idols and other objects venerated by various tribes and clans. These sacred objects comprised a black stone which was built into the wall of the shrine.Thus, it merged their several cults into one. Many other divinities such as the three Goddesses— Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Al-Manat received special honour at Mecca. Al-Lat meant 'Goddess', Al-Uzza meant 'all-powerful' and regarded as the Goddess of might and protection and Al-Manat meant the 'Goddess of fate.' Their idols were kept inside the *Kaaba*. The worshippers honoured the *Kaaba* by circling it a fixed number of times on foot and touching the sacred stones built into it, particularly the Black Stone in one corner.*Zamzam*(*Quraysh al-Bataih*) was the sacred well situated near *Kaaba*.



Goddess Al-Lat

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Allat.jpg

The people of Mecca also believed in the existence of minor living spirits or *jinns*which could be helpful as well as harmful to the living beings. The negative spirits had to be defeated by adopting magical practices and the good ones were to be appeased.[2]Each of these spirits was associated with a shrine in some given locality, a tree or a grove or even a rock formation. The Meccans also believed in the divinity of stars.

6.2.2 Tribes in Medina

In Medina also the idols were associated with various levels of tribal organizationand household idols were the most common form of idol worship. Above the household idols were the idols of the noblemen. In Medina every nobleman owned an idol that had a name of its own. Besides this, smaller tribal groups had their own idols.

The idols belonging to smaller tribal groups were known as*batns*. Bayts were the sanctuaries where these idols were kept. Sacrifices were offered to them. *Huzam* was an idol above the *batns*. Sacrifices were also offered to *Huzam*. The Khazraj tribe used to worship the idol of Al-Khamis. The *Aws*and *Khazraj* worshipped the idol of Al-Saida which was located on Mount Uhud, north of Medina. Superstition and magical practices were common in Medina. The people used amulets to protect themselves from the evil eye.

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[2] Kumar, Rakesh, *Ancient and Medieval World: From Evolution of Humans to the Crisis of Feudalism*, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd, 2018, p.387

Self-Check Exercise

4. Write a short note on the religion and ritual practices followed by the people of Mecca and Medina.
5. Match the following:

(i)	*Hubal*	(a) Goddess of Fate
(ii)	*Huzam*	(b) God of Mecca
(iii)	*Al-Mannat*	(c) Medina

6.3 Trade in Arabia

Hijaz was the most important trading centre of western and central Arabia. It rose to prominence in the 6th century. It was strategically located at the junction of two trade routes— the route running from north to south, linking Palestine to Yemen, and the route connecting Ethiopia and the Red Sea in the west with the Persian Gulf in the east. Mecca attained some of its importance from being a place of pilgrimage, a feature which the trading community of the settlement might have tried to promote to strengthen its position. Mercantile activity was the backbone of the economy of Mecca as there were hardly any possibilities for agriculture. Mecca housed a colony of traders operating on the Hijaz route.**Ira M. Lapidus** opined that the pilgrimage at Mecca, not only served religious purpose but also for the arbitration of disputes, settlements of claims and debts and indeed trade. In the middle of the 6thcentury, the Quraysh tribe of Meccadominated the trade linking north-eastern Arabia with Yemen or with Abyssinia by sea. They also dominated the internal trade.

Trade also connected Arabia with the wider world. Merchants imported spices,clothes, jewellery, weapons, grain, and wine into Arabia. Arabians exported hides, leather and animals. Arabian markets intersected with east and south coasts of the Indian Ocean. The caravans facilitated a link between the civilized parts of southern Arabia and the Fertile Crescent. Besides their own produce, the caravans carried goods in transit from India, East Africa and the Far East on the one hand, and on the other from all over the Mediterranean region. The Bedouins used to control everything that passed through their territories.

A gradual change occurred in Arabia during the 6th centuryregarding the occupation of the Arabs. Some of the tribes starting opting for trade as their main occupation. These tribes gradually abandoned nomadic pastoralism and became permanent trading communities. The shift to trade was most prominent in Hijaz province of which Mecca was a part. The Sassanid-Byzantine conflictled to the dislocation of the international trade route passing through the Persian Gulf and Iraq. As a consequence some of the trade was diverted through the Red Sea or overland from Yemen to Syria. Sonumerous caravanswent viaHijaz where numerous oases could be found on the way. Now Yemen became a significant transit point in the international trade. As a consequence Hijaz route acquired greater significance. It was the result of prominent position acquired by Hijaz on account of the restructuring of the trade links that Mecca (which was a settlement of traders in Hijaz) acquired greater importance in the 6th century.

Self-Check Exercise

6. Name the most important trading center of western and central Arabia.
7. What was the backbone of the economy of Mecca in the pre-Islamic Arabia?

6.4 Political Conditions

Before the advent of Islam in Arabia, there was a total absence of political organization in any form. There had never been a single person who was declared or recognized as a ruler before the establishment of Medina. Except Yemen in the south-west, no part of the Arabian Peninsula had any government at any time. Tribal system was the only type of political system known to the Arabs in most of Arabia.In practice, the Arabs were not bound by any written code of law, and there was no state structure which could enforce its statutes. They never acknowledged any authority except the authority of the chiefs of their respective tribes. In most cases the authority of the tribal chiefs relied on individual character and personality.Close lineage loyalties mattered the most.

The tribal chief called as *Sayyid or Sheikh-i-qabilah*. The responsibilities of the chief included defence of the tribe, settling of disputes, and in many cases maintaining the groups' sacred symbols. However, the chief had no authority to force the acceptance of his position upon any family or clan. Everyone was free to break his relations with the clan, and leave at any given time with his family.

Common court of justice was non-existent. In the absence of any legal authority, intergroup curbs were maintained by the principle of the tit-for-tat blood-feud, i.e. an injury by an outsider to any member of a group was considered as a crime committed against the whole group and the enmity was considered against the whole group to which the outsider belonged. The injured group's honour required that it must avenge the dishonour. 'Eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life' was the norm that was generallyfollowed.

Self-Check Exercise

8. What was the only type of political system known in pre-Islamic Arabia?
9. What was the tribal chief in pre-Islamic Arabia known as?

6.5 Social Conditions

The pre-Islamic society of Arabia was a male dominated society. Women had no status of any kind. The female infants were buried alive. Camel nomadic pastoralism was the dominant feature of the pre-Islamic social formation in Arabia. The internal workings of these clan based tribal groups are discussed below:

6.5.1 Tribal Organization and Leadership

Society in Arabia was tribal and comprised nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled populations. The Bedouins developed their distinctive type of social organization. They were constantly on the move. Their lifestyle became a typical feature of Arabia. Only a few communities led a settled life. The social organization of the Bedouins was based on an independent tribe (*qabila*) consisting of tightly-nit kinship groups or clans.Larger groups were called as tribes and the smaller groups were called as clans by Marshall Hodgson. Each tribe had its ancestor which was either real or imaginary. As the population grew,the clans moved away from the

tribes because the existing desert resources could not sustain a very large population. This facilitated in maintaining a proportionate size of each tribe. The equality among the Bedouins was strengthened by their tribal organization. Each member of a tribe was equal to any other.

There was a system of hereditary social and economic unity among smaller or larger groups of families. Families were connected in larger groups for general economic purposes, and these in turn in still larger ones for political strength. There was internal autonomy in groups at every level. Each larger group had its own pasturing grounds and defended its grazing rights in their own areas, and attempted to improve its position at the expense of others.

Although largely egalitarian, the clans were led by the tribal chief.He was selected by the elder people of the clan from among the prominent families. The position of tribal chief could be hereditary but the personal prestige played a decisive role in the selection of the chief. Therefore, he had to displaya number of qualities to retain his followers by his kindness and generosity, to show moderation in all circumstances, generally to conformto the unspoken will of those he governed and yet proclaim his own valour and authority.

6.5.2 Inequality and Slavery

A few families and clans became prosperous by means of plunder, trade or by preying on the settled tribes or even on other nomads and this led to the process of social differentiation.Individuals belonging to different clans even built up private fortunes from time to time. Thus,their society was divided between the rich and the poor. Many tribes or clans, such as the tribes of smiths, were looked down upon by the rest as inferior. Members of some of the wealthy clans used to keep slaves. Male and female slaves were bought and sold like animals, and they formed the most depressed class of the Arabian society. The conditions of a nomadic life were, however,unsuitable for the institution of slavery. As a result, the slaves were often freed from the bondage. The freed slaves or *mawla* remained the dependents of their previous masters.

6.5.3 The Elite Camel Nomads

In the more desert areas of Arabia, the Bedouins or camel nomads were considered to be among the elites. They had some definite advantages that have also been noticed by the great Islamic thinkers like IbnKhaldun. He described the camel nomads as better than sheep rearers because they had greater mobility and could cover large distances between the water holes in the desert. Apart from camels, they often had horses which they used for raiding purposes. Sheep and goat herders also resided in the area. However, they had to stay near agricultural lands and as a result they were at the mercy of those who were more mobile than them. The pure camel nomads were more mobile and resourceful than either the other pastoralists or agriculturists. Many a time the agriculturalists also bought protection and assurance to desist from plunder from the Bedouins nomads in the form of a tribute called *khuwwa*as the latter had the military advantage.

6.5.4 Intra-Tribal Warfare

The relations between the tribes were not peacefuldue to conditions of poverty. There was a strong temptation to acquire the wealth of those who were richer. Therefore, many tribeswere engaged in *ghazwa* or raids on other tribes. Moreover, war was their pastime or

rather a dangerous sport. Eternal peace held no appeal to them, and war provided an escape from work and the monotonous desert life. War provided them the opportunity to display their fighting skills and they could distinguish themselves by their heroism and simultaneously win glory and honour for their tribes. The rules of these raids were laid down by the tradition.

Self-Check Exercise

10. What was *Mawla*?
11. Define *Khuwwa*.
12. Write a short note on tribal organization and leadership in pre-Islamic Arabia.

6.6 Economic Conditions

Camel rearing was the basic occupation of the Bedouins. Sedentary communities lived along the oases and were involved in the agricultural activities. To some extent the Arabs were also involved in the mining activities.

6.6.1 Camel Nomadism

Most of the Arabian Peninsula was a desert. Therefore, the natural way of life was nomadic and pastoral. During the second millennium BCE, the inhabitants of these regions domesticated the camel as it was ideally suited to the desert. Camel pastoralists were known as Bedouin. Once camel nomadism had developed, it carried with it potentialities of a major social force.

Camel nomadism prevailed, mainly in the northern, western and central regions of Arabian Peninsula. Camels allowed their herders greater mobility than other pastoral animals. Camels can travel continuously for three weeks without food and even water, and so to travel farther between places without water in temperatures as high as 50 degree Celsius. As camel was the best means of transport in a desert terrain, it could be used to explore and exploit the scarce resources of the desert. The camel was also a great beast of burden, and could be utilized to carry heavy loads. Besides, the camel also provided good milk, meat and hide.Hence, it not only sustained its owners but was also a commercially worthwhile option. This provided Bedouins a potential predominance not only over the desert oases but even the nearby reaches of the settled countries, allowing them not merely to trade, but in favourable circumstances, also to exact tribute. The camel nomads were involved in the commerce between the Mediterranean lands and the southern seas.

6.6.2 Agriculture

Small farming communities in the region grew a few cereals. A small settled community near the oasesstarting cultivating the date palm. Dates, fruits and some grains could be cultivated in the oases by utilizing natural springs or by digging wells. The date palm was not only a fruit but every single part of it could be utilized in some way or the other. It was called as the '*mother and aunt*' of the Arabs. Date and camel milk was the staple diet of the people of this region. However, the Bedouin attacks on the settled communities led to pasturage becoming more important than agriculture as a means of livelihood in the desert.

Agriculture was the backbone of the economy inOman and Bahrain region. Bahrain exported grain to Mecca. The farmers who cultivated the date palms, fruits and vegetables were the Bedouin camel herders. The Bedouins, peasants and townsfolk of the neighbouring areas, all depended upon each other. As a result, they had to co-exist.

6.6.3 Industry and Mining

Arabia comprised of many economically developed and productive areas. The Sassanids helped develop silver and copper mining in Yemen. Copper and silver were also mined in eastern Arabia. Leather and cloth was produced in Yemen. In north-central Arabia, the town of Al-Rabadha, on the Kufa-Medina route, produced glass, metal, ceramics and soapstone wares.

Self-Check Exercise

13. Write a note on camel nomadism in pre-Islamic Arabia.
14. What was known as the 'mother and aunt' of the Arabs?

6.7 Literature in Pre-Islamic Arabia

There was hardly any opportunity for the arts to flourish in an unstable tribal society. However, literature was an exception. Indeed, the political, social, economic and religious complexity of the pre-Islamic Arabian society created a rich and urbane cultural environment.

Arabia was multilingual, although the language spoken by them was a form of Semitic which was a variation of Aramaic. It was probably the most spoken language in pre-Islamic Arabia. By the end of the 5th century, a distinctive Arab linguistic identity had been formed. The Arabic script appeared a century before the Islamic era. The Arabian script either developed from the Nabataean or directly from the Syriac. It was later on re-shaped by the Armanean Jews.

Arabic was also a language of religion. The Old and New Testament of the Bible was translated in Arabic by Iraqi and Himyarite Christians in the 4th century. Christian liturgies and prayer books were also prepared in Arabic. A common language was an important uniting factor for the otherwise scattered Arab tribes. Patricia Crone opined that there wasa remarkable "cultural homogeneity" among the Arabs in the 6thcentury.

The most outstanding expression of the distinctive Arabic linguistic was the growth of a tradition of oral poetry which was highly valued by the Arabs. From 500 CE poems began to be composed in Arabic in a specific form known as*rajaz*. Each tribe had its own poets. There were a number of poets who composed in this form, usually extempore. Each tribe had its own poetswho entertained their audience by narrating tales of valour and glory of their tribe. Besides *rajaz*, a highly evolved form of poetry also developed in Arabia. This was known as *qasida* or ode. These poems were long and could be sung. A particular form of *qasida*, called *muallaqat* or suspended poems, gained popularity across the Arabian Peninsula. One of the earliest and most renowned composers of the *muallaqat* was ImrulQays, who is considered to be the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia. Some other distinguished poets of*muallaqat*belonging to different tribes were Tarafa, Zuhayr and Labid. These poems were recited all over thereby giving the language a certain uniformity.

Self-Check Exercise

15. Define *qasida*.
16. Name the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia.

6.8 Summary

- Pre-Islamic Arabia is the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam. Nomadic pastoralists inhabited this region and called themselves Arabs.
- The camel pastoralists, known as Bedouin (from *bdu* or nomad) moved oases to oases with their animals.
- The Arabs were divided into tribes and no state formation occurred prior to the advent of Islam in the region. Mecca came under the control of Quraysh tribe in the 5th century.
- *Aws* and *Khazraj* were the most prominent Arab tribes from Yemen, who migrated to Medina long before the advent of Islam.
- Before the advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula most Bedouin tribes practiced polytheism, mostly in the form of animism.
- Idolatry and Totemism were also common religious practices in the pre-Islamic Arabia. Christianity and Judaism were also prevalent.
- Hijaz was the most important trading centre of western and central Arabia which rose to prominence in the 6th century. Trade also connected Arabia with the wider world.
- Before the advent of Islam in Arabia, there was a total absence of political organization in any form. The tribal chief called as *Sayyid or Sheikh-i-qabilah*.
- The pre-Islamic society of Arabia was a male dominated society. Women had no status of any kind. Camel nomadic pastoralism was the dominant feature of the pre-Islamic social formation in Arabia.
- Society in Arabia was tribal and comprised nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled populations. Each tribe had its ancestor which was either real or imaginary.
- A few families and clans became prosperous by means of plunder, trade or by preying on the settled tribes or even on other nomads and this led to the process of social differentiation. Members of some of the wealthy clans used to keep slaves.
- In the more desert areas of Arabia, the Bedouins or camel nomads were considered to be among the elites. They had some definite advantages over other tribes. Tribes were engaged in *ghazwa* or raids on other tribes.
- Camel rearing was the basic occupation of the Bedouins. Sedentary communities lived along the oases and were involved in the agricultural activities. Dates, fruits and some grains could be cultivated in the oases by utilizing natural springs or by digging wells.
- Arabia comprised of many economically developed and productive areas. Industry and mining were developed in various regions.
- Literature flourished in pre-Islamic Arabia. Aramaic was the most spoken language. The most outstanding expression of the distinctive Arabic linguistic was the growth of a tradition of oral poetry. Each tribe had its own poets.

6.9 Glossary

- **Fertile Crescent:** The Fertile Crescent is a crescent shaped region which includes the modern day Iraq, Israel, Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordon, southern tip of Turkey and the western tip of Iran.
- ***Hajj:*** *It* refers to the pilgrimage to Mecca that every adult Muslim is supposed make at least once in their lifetime.
- **Nomads:** A member of a people that travels from place to place to find fresh pasture for its animals and has no permanent home.
- ***Totemism*****:** A system of belief in which humans are said to have kinship or a mystical relationship with a spirit-being, such as an animal or plant.

6.10 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Refer to sub-section 6.1.1
2. Refer to sub-section 6.1.2
3. Aws and Khazraj
4. Refer to sub-section 6.2.1 and 6.2.2
5. (i) b (ii) c (iii) c
6. Hijaz
7. Mercantile activity
8. Tribal system
9. *Sayyid or Sheikh-i-qabilah*
10. In pre-Islamic Arabia the freed slaves were called as *Mawla*.
11. The tribute collected by the Beduoin nomads from the agriculturalists for their protection was known as *khuwwa*.
12. Refer to sub-section 6.5.1
13. Refer to sub-section 6.6.1
14. Date palm
15. A highly evolved form of poetry that developed in pre-Islamic Arabia was called *qasida*.
16. ImrulQays

6.11 Suggested Readings

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6. Robinson, Chase F., (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Volume I, *The Formation of the Islamic World, Sixth to Eleventh Centuries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
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6.12 Terminal Questions

1. Describe the tribal confederations in the pre-Islamic Arabia.
2. Give an account of the religious and ritual practices of pre-Islamic tribals of Mecca and Medina.
3. What do you know about the Arab trading network before the 6th century?
4. Explain the political structure in pre-Islamic Arabia.
5. Describe the chief features of the pre-Islamic Arabian society.
6. Analyze the economic conditions of the pre-Islamic Arabia.
7. Account for the growth of literature in the pre-Islamic Arabia.



CHAPTER-7
RISE OF ISLAM

Structure

7.0 Introduction

Islam emerged in the beginning of the 7th century CE in the Arabian Penninsula in modern Saudi Arabia. It was in this region that Prophet Muhammad laid the foundation of Islam but also a new civilization that expanded to the entire Near East within two centuries of the death of Prophet. The rise of Islam had a huge impact on West Asia, Europe and Central Asia and changed the

course of the history of the World Islam is believed to be one of the youngest, great world religions. Islam is an Arabic work which means “surrender” or “submission”. The followers of this religion are called as Muslims.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life of Prophet Muhammad,
- Understand the teachings of Prophet Muhammad,
- Analyze the various theories pertaining to the rise of Islam.

7.1 Prophet and his Teachings

When Islam first emerged in Arabia, there was hardly any indication that within 150 years it would dominate the entire Middle East, northern Africa and Spain. The early spread of Islam was directly related to the revelations and work of Prophet Muhammad.

7.1.1 Life of Prophet Muhammad

The information about the early life of Prophet Muhammad is quite sketchy. Most of the Muslim sources dealing with his career have been written more than one and a half century after the actual event. However, our information related to the life of Muhammad is more abundant in comparison with the founders of other religions. These sources comprise the holy Quran which is considered as God’s revelations through Gabriel (the angel) to Muhammad and which is the ultimate source of Muslim religious belief. Another important source of Prophet’s life and his teachings is*hadis* or *hadith*. It deals mainly with the ritual, moral and other religious aspects of the Muslims. The other sources are based on oral traditions and written accounts such as the biography of Muhammad written by IbnIshaq. Which was later on revised by IbnHisham.

There is a consensus that the Prophet Muhammad was born in 570 CE in Mecca. His birth was considered auspicious by many because a terrible epidemic which was ravaging Arabia suddenly ended.Muhammad belonged to the prominent clan BanuHashim of the Quraysh tribe. Besides being prominent traders, the Hashim tribe had also been the caretaker of the holy well called Zamzam at Mecca. However, the Hashimshad lost their prominence in the caravan trade by the time Prophet Muhammad was born. Muhammad’s father Abdullah, died before his birth. He also lost his mother in in his childhood. He was brought up by his grandfather and later by his uncle Abu Talib, who was fairly well-to-do merchant. Due to poverty Muhammad could not receive any formal education but he was trained to look after sheep and camels. As a youth he spent most of his time in travelling with the caravans into southern Arabia and Syria. Muhammad was known to many for his sincerity and honesty. They called him ‘Amin’. Muslim sources suggest that when Muhammad grew up he found employment with a wealthy widow-merchant named Khadija who traded with Syria and Palestine. Muhammad assisted her with her enterprise. Later, at the age of 25 Muhammad married Khadija who was much older and had two sons (who died early) and had many daughters among whom Fatima became popular. She was married to Ali. Fatima became the mother of two much-revered sons, Hasan and Hussain.

From his early youth Muhammad was of religious bent and practiced meditation. He pondered much on the religious life of his fellowmen. During his travels he had met many Jews and the Christians whose monotheistic ideas had deep influence on him. He spent most of his time in religious meditations. Occasionally, he would visitMount Hira, near Mecca, for meditation and fasting. Many a times he felt into trance and uttered words which came to be recorded by his early disciples. Later they constituted a part of Quran. As per the sources, it was during one his meditational exercises in 610 CE at Mount Hira that Muhammad (at the age of 40) had a spiritual experience in the form of a series of God's revelations which became the basis of his religious mission. He realized that he was the chief messenger, or Prophet, of the Supreme being-Allah and therefore had the great mission to fulfil. These revelations showed him the vision of a great and just God (Allah) who would give reward or punishment to an individual on the basis of their good or bad deeds on the day of the judgment (last day of an individual human being on this earth). The thoughts of desirability of the charity and piety and the fear of pride in human power, attachment to worldly things,neglect of the poor and almsgiving became the operational features of these revelations. These revelations forms the Quran, the religious book of the Muslims.

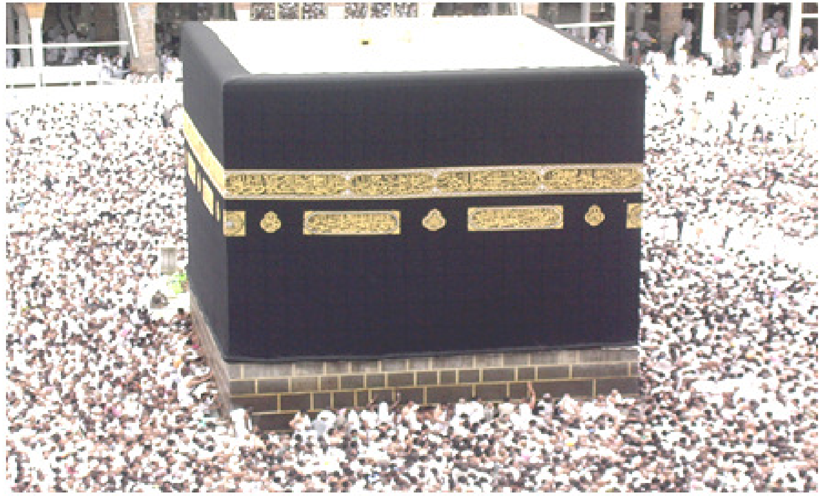
Initially, it was Khadija who believed in Muhammad's Prophethood, but later from 613 CE onwards Muhammad had started preaching a small group of his followers in Mecca who had accepted his religious ideas. They came to be known as *Muslim* (plural *Muslimun*), i.e. those who had submitted (to Allah). The religion itself was denoted by the term Islam, which means submission, derived from the same root as the world *Muslim*.Khadija, Abu Bakr and Ali were the earliest followers of Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet started preaching the principles of his new faith to the Meccans. But since majority of the people of Mecca practiced a polytheistic religion, there was strong opposition to the strict monotheistic ideology of Prophet Muhammad. Even the members of the Quraysh tribe opposed his preaching and ridiculed the concept of the last Day of Judgment (*qiyama*) and resurrection, and they also called him as *kabin* or fortuneteller.Thus, the general attitude of the Meccans remained hostile. The priests of the temple of Kaaba were alarmed and they opposed the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.However, he continued to preach the tenets of Islam with the support of his clan, Khadija and Abu Talib. But the unfortunate death of both Khadija and Abu Talib in 619 CE made it difficult for him to preach in Mecca. His followers too were subjected to social and economic boycott. According to Ira M.Lapidus, the new religion threatened to dissolve the old order of the society and to create a new one. Thus, confronted with this kind of ostracism and gradual loss of support from the Hashim clan, Prophet Muhammad decided to move to Medina(Yathrib)in 622 CE. Muhammad's retreat to Medina with a group of 75 followers (*muhajirun*) is considered as the most important year for Islam and it was called *Hijrah* or *Hejira* (Emigration). It is the beginning of the Islamic calendar and was determined to be July 16, 622 CE. It is consideredas the beginning of the Islamic era to commemorate Muhammad's emigration from Mecca to Medina.

It was in Medina the Prophet Muhammad could get warm reception to his new faith. He gathered a large number of disciples. His supporters in Medina were known as *ansar* (helpers). His fame and that of his new faith began to spread rapidly all over Arabia.By the end of his life he had laid the foundations of a political structure in Medina based on Islam. He was no longer just a religious leader, but the head of an emerging state centered on Medina. He started laying down the

rules for governance. His followers constituted the army. He entered into alliances with the neighboring tribes. Many tribes embraced the new faith thereby becoming part of the Muslim religious community known as *ummah*. Income for running the state came from the raids. One-fifth of the booty went directly to the Prophet. Additionally, regular voluntary contributions were levied on the tribes which accepted Muhammad's leadership. This gradually developed into a tax known as *zakat* which was extracted from all the Muslims of the state.

Now the Prophet was in a position to wage a war against the Quraysh of Mecca. A major victory for the forces of early Islam was the battle of Badr in 624 CE where the Prophet defeated a large Meccan army. This victory not only dented the supremacy of the Meccans but also enhanced Muhammad's prestige in the entire Arabia. The successful raids against the Quraysh trading caravans disrupted the Meccan trade. However, he faced some reverses at the hands of Meccan forces in 625 CE at Uhud and in 627 CE at Ditch. As a result, a truce was reached with the Meccans and the Muslims were allowed to perform pilgrimage at Mecca for three days but the Meccans refused to recognize Muhammad as their Prophet.

Muhammad attacked Mecca in 630 CE and forced the Meccan leaders to surrender the city.The citizens of Mecca embraced Islam *en masse*. Ira M.Lapidus opines that the victory over Mecca was also the culmination of the tribal policy of Muhammad as by the end of his life, he was able to create a large-scale Arabian federation of oases and tribes. Thus, he provided a solution to the destructive anarchy in Arabia. Along with this, all the idols and other objects of worship at Kaaba in Mecca were removed. The Islamic symbol which was located in Kaaba was a black stone which was traditionally associated with Abraham. Abraham was considered as the common ancestor of all the Arabs.Kaaba was declared as the holiest shrine of Islam. Mecca became the focal point of the most sacred pilgrimage (*hajj*) of the Muslims. Prophet Muhammadpassed away in 632 CE. He sowed the seeds of a new religion called *Islam* in Arabia, and in the course of time it became one of the great religions of the world.



The Kaaba in Mecca

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Kaaba#/media/File:Kabaa_(January_2003).jpg

7.1.2 Teachings of Prophet Muhammad

Not all of the early teachings of Prophet Muhammad were new. Modern scholars believe that there are many similarities between the Quran and the principles of Judaism and Christianity. Similarity with Christianity has been found in the last Day of Judgment which was also preached by Syrian monks and missionaries at the fairs of Arabia. Whereas similarity with Judaism have been found in such characteristics as strict monotheism, belief in written revelations and the concept of a chosen messenger. In fact, some were much like the teachings of Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad's teachings challenged and upset the people of Arabia. It changed many aspects of the life of Arabians.

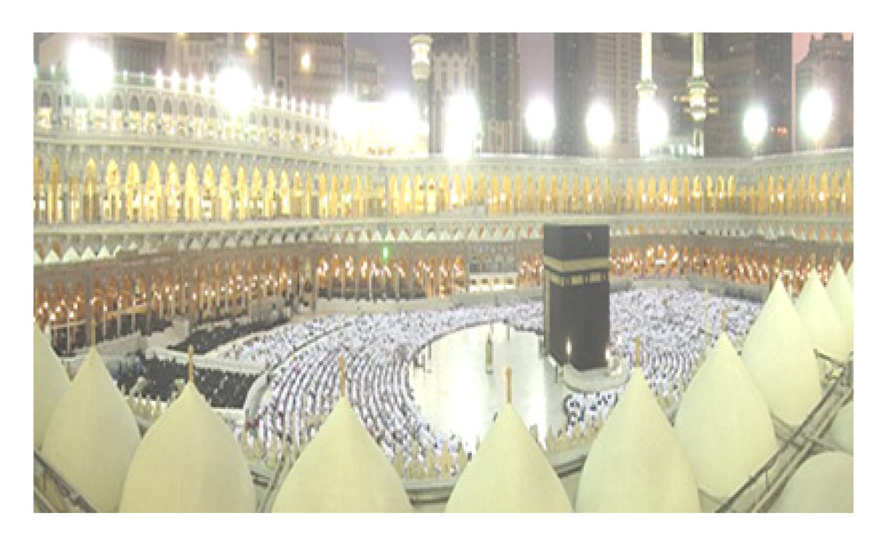
7.1.2.1 Declaration of Faith (*Shahda*)

Mohammed preached that there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his Prophet.The belief that "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" (*la ilahilla Allah, Muhammadurrasul Allah*) is central to Islam. This recital of the creed is called *kalma*. This phrase in Arabiccalligraphy is often appears in architecture and a range of objects, including the *Quran*. One becomes a Muslim by reciting this phrase with conviction. God reveals his desires to manby means of his prophets and Mohammed declared that he was the last prophet. He condemned idol-worship. He asked his followers to totally submit themselves to the Almighty and all merciful God Allah without whose blessings no one can enter the paradise after one's death. Those who do not believe in Him would suffer in hell. All those who believe in Him and obey His will should live like brothers. All are equal in the eyes of God.

7.1.2.2 Daily Prayers (*Salat*)

Muhammad preached that every Muslim is expected to pray five times a day: at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and bed-time. The five daily prayers of *salat* are:

1. **Morning (*Fajr*):** This prayer is supposed be offered in the morning before sunrise. It is forbidden to pray during the time of rising sun, because that may give the appearance of sun worship.
2. **Midday (*Zuhr*):** The time for this prayer is early afternoon, starting with the decline of the sun to mid-afternoon.
3. **Afternoon (*Asr*):**This Prayer is offered in the late afternoon but no later than half an hour before sunset.
4. **Sunset (*Maghrib*):** The time for this prayer is shortly after sunset. It must not be said while the sun is setting.
5. **Nighttime (*Isa*):**This prayer should be offered after nightfall when it is dark. It can be said up to midnight.



Maghrib Prayer in Masjid Al-Haram

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maghrib_Prayer_in_Masjid_Al-Haram.jpg

Prayer includes a recitation of the opening chapter (*sura*) of the Quran, and is sometimes performed on a small rug or mat used expressly for this purpose. Muslims can pray anywhereindividually or together in a mosque, where a leader in prayer (*imam*) guides the congregation. The faithful pray by bowing many times while standing and then kneeling and touching the ground or prayer mat with their foreheads. Men gather in the mosque near midday on Friday to pray and to listen to a sermon, *khutba*; women are welcome but not obliged to participate. After the prayer, a sermon focuses on a passage from the Quran, followed by prayers by the imam and a discussion of a specific religious topic.

7.1.2.3 Alms (*Zakat*)

According to the Islamic law, Muslims contribute a fixed proportion of their income for the upkeep of the poor, destitute, travelers in need, for those fighting in the way of Allah, for those serving in the way of Islam, for slaves to buy freedom and for benevolent works. The practice of this virtue is known as *zakat*. Zakat literally means "purification"; it purifies the giver and what is given. Many rulers and rich Muslims build mosques, drinking fountains, hospitals, schools, and other institutions both as a religious duty and to secure the blessings associated with charity.

7.1.2.4 Fasting (*Saum*)

During the holy month of Ramadanall healthy adult Muslims are expected to fast from dawn to dusk. To fast is to abstain from food, drink, smoking and conjugal relations from dawn to sunset. A Muslim can purify himself spiritually and physically, elevate his soul and obtain nearness to the Almighty.However, chronically sick, elderly, pregnant and menstruating women are temporarily exempted from fasting. They may make up for fasting by feeding the poor.Through this temporary deprivation, they renew their awareness of and gratitude for everything God has provided in their lives—including the holy Quran, which was first revealed to the Prophet during this month. During the lunar month of Ramadan they share the hunger and thirst of the needy as a reminder of the religious duty to help those underprivileged.

7.1.2.5 Pilgrimage (*Hajj*)

All Muslim whose health and finances permit are required to make pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca (in present-day Saudi Arabia) at least once in their lifetime. The pilgrimage is known as *hajj*. The Kaaba, a cubical structure covered in black embroidered hangings, is at the center of the Haram Mosque in Mecca. Muslims believe that it is the house Abraham built for God, and face in its direction (*qibla*) when they pray. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, believers from all over the world have gathered around the Kaaba in Mecca on the eighth and twelfth days of the final month of the Islamic calendar.The Hajj serves as a striking reminder of the unity of God and it accentuates the brotherhood and equality of human beings, as well as the importance of man's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his Creator.

The above mentioned five teachings are known as **five pillars of Islam**. They constitute the basic requirements of Islamic practice and are accepted by Muslims all over the world, irrespective of ethnic, regional or sectarian differences.

7.1.2.6 Monotheism (*Tawhid*)

The chief message of Islam is monotheism. Muslims believe that there is only one God who created the universe and everything within it. Therefore, we must devote our true and pure love only to this one God. Since only God can truly harm us, then we should only fear God and not fear anyone or anything else more than we fear God.

7.1.2.7 Belief in the Angels

The Muslims believe that God created angels just likeHe created human beings. However, humans were given free will, whereas angels are always obedient to the will of God. Angels perform the tasks given to them by God. For example, the angel Gabriel is responsible for communicating the revelations from God to the Prophets and Messengers.

7.1.2.8 Belief in the Prophets and Messengers

Muslims believe that God created humans and that He wanted us to lead a good life. He does not want us to be misguided or to live miserable lives. Therefore, God will hold every human being answerable for every action they have done in their life. God has sent Prophets and Messengers in order to teach humanity and to guide us. These Prophets and Messengers are human beings. They had the role of receiving guidance and revelations from God through the angel Gabriel and to spread the message among the rest of people.

7.1.2.9 Belief in the Holy Books

The Muslims believe that God revealed certain messages to guide humanity and to teach them right from wrong. These messages were meant to guide people to worship God only, and not their idols. Another purpose of these messages was to help humans establish a set of laws that would enable them to curtail injustice and evil actions and to make them live happy and fruitful lives. These messages are known as the Holy Books. These include the Quran (given to Muhammad), the Torah (given to Moses), the Gospel (given to Jesus), the Psalms (given to David), and the Scrolls (given to Abraham). Muslims are of the opinion that these earlier scriptures were divinely revealed in their original form, but that only the Quran remains as it was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

7.1.2.10 Belief in the Day of Judgment

The Muslims believe that on the Day of Judgment, humans will be judged for their actions in this life for each of their actions in this life no matter how small. Since God is the most just, He will not allow someone who lived their entire life stealing, cheating and hurting others to escape without getting punishment. Those who followed God's guidance will be rewarded with paradise while those who rejected God's guidance will be punished with hell.

7.1.2.11 Belief in Predestination

This article of faith addresses the question of God's will. It can be expressed as the belief that everything is governed by divine decree, namely that whatever happens in one's life is preordained, and that believers should respond to the good or bad that befalls them with thankfulness or patience. This concept does not negate the concept of "free will;" since humans do not have prior knowledge of God's decree, they do have freedom of choice.

The Muslims believe that everything is governed by divine decree. Whatever happens in one's life is preordained. This does not imply that God controls us. Humans were given free will and they have full control over their actions. However, God knows all events that have occurred in the past or will take place in the future. It is believed that if God wanted to stop something from happening or force something to happen, he is certainly able to do so. Therefore, everything takes place because God has allowed it.

The above mentioned six beliefs are those that are commonly held by Muslims, as laid out in the Quran and Hadith. These are known as the **Six Articles of Faith** in Islam.

Self-Check Exercise

1. When and where was Prophet Muhammad born?
2. To which tribe did Prophet Muhammad belonged?
3. What is Hijrah?
4. When was the Battle of Badr fought?
5. When did Prohet Muhammad passed away?
6. What is Kaaba?
7. Name the five daily prayers (*salat*) in Islam.
8. Define *Zakat*.
9. What do you understand by *Saum*?
10. What is Day of Judgment in Islam?

7.2 Theories Pertaining to the Rise of Islam: Historiography

The rise of Islam has been a topic of debate among the historians. There are basically three theories as discussed below:-

7.2.1 Meccan Trade Hypothesis

W.M Watt proposed theMeccan Trade Hypothesis. He saw the emergence of new religion as a result of deeper socio-economic changes and tried to find the reasons for its wide

acceptance among Arab tribes within a short span of time. He examines the nature of Arabian society while explaining the rise of Islam. He argues that the rise of Islam was due to the transformation which was taking shape as a result of trade and adoption of sedentary way of life by some tribes in the region. The expansion of Meccan commerce brought in prosperity to some tribes engaged in trade due to which the society became inequitable. Iteroded traditional ties and introduced tensions in the society leading to tribal conflicts. The wealth from trade or earnings from pilgrims brought into Mecca did not benefit everyone uniformly. The rise of Mecca as acenter of expanding international trade network caused a number of problems: increased social stratification, greater social inequalities, and greater dependence of poorer classes on wealthier ones. This led to conflict at various levels. This was not confined to the Meccan based tribes but also among those tribes who were engaged in the network of trade. The Quraysh tribe had no mechanism to cope with this new situation. According to Watt, Muhammad's attempt to bring about unity under a new faith was an answer to this new emerging social differentiation and Islam provided a foundation for state formation in Arabia. In this situation, Prophet Muhammad intended to dissolve the tribal units altogether and form single community. The movement laid stress on social justice and rejected all forms of hierarchical class differentiation in the Arab society. The rise of Prophet Mohammad and the success of his teachings are interpreted as solutions he provided to the contemporary social problems. Some other scholars such as MaximeRodinson, Marshal G.S. Hodgson, have accepted and further elaborated Watt'sMeccan Trade hypothesis.

7.2.2 Nativist Theory

Some historians, such as Patricia Crone, has seriously questioned the validityof Watt's Meccan trade hypothesis in the context of rise of Islam. She has forwarded an alternative view in her *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*.Crone asserted that the Mecca traded mostly in goods of mass consumption rather than in luxury goods. While Watt argued that Mecca was the transit point in the long-distance trade between India, Africa and Mediterranean, Patricia Crone on the other hand asserted that trade was essentially in commodities of small value and was incapable of generating much wealth. The surplus produced by the mercantile economy was not enough to create wide disparities in the society. She also argues that the Quranic traditions also do not prove the increasing awareness of such social inequalities or distress in the Arabian society. Further, she asserts that the tribal order had not broken away and the traditional way of life was still intact and the society functioned very well. Crone points out that Watt's theory fails to explain the fact that it was in Medina and not in Mecca that Muhammad's teachings were widely accepted and so the problems to which Muhammad is supposed to have provided the solution was that of Medina.[1]

The Meccans were initially opposed to Islam since they preferred a traditional way of life. Crone suggests many reasons for Arabs to accept Islam. One of the reasons was that the Arabs were not rigid in their loyalty towards their Gods and changed their loyalty according to their practical

[1]Kumar, Rakesh, *Ancient and Medieval World: From the Evolution of Humans to the Crisis of Feudalism*, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd, 2018, p.395.

requirements. Moreover, it was around one God that the Arabs were to be grouped together and all the ancestral deities that endorsed current divisions were declared as false. Apart from this, raids and plunder were a useful way of augmenting their scanty resources. The new faith appealed to them as it helped to legitimize the conquest. The tribes were offered with the program of state formation through the formation of *umma* and the initiation of *jihad*.

Thus Patricia Crone suggests early Islam as 'nativist movement'. The nativism of the Arabs was denoted by deep attachment to the Arabian way of life in opposition to the penetration of foreign dominance or influence.The foreign influences was represented by the Byzantine and Persian attempts to dominate the Arabian territory. Crone further argues that a nativist movement occurs where there is no political organization and it invariably takes a religious form. Nevertheless, Crone agrees with Watt's view that the process of settling down which was occurring in some parts of Arabia had necessitated the growth of some political structures at the expense of tribal ties.[2]

7.2.3 Revisionist Theory

In 2015, historian Fred Donner conducted an extensive survey of the revisionist works being done on the subject of origin of Islam. The appearance of these first revisionist works completely invigorated the study of early Islam. He indicated that another dimension was added with Peter Brown's epoch-making book *The World of Late Antiquity* in 1971. He combinedmany fields of study that hadpreviously been largely separate. His integration of early Islamic history in the context of Late Antiquity broadened the viewpoint of historians on early Islam. According to Donner, there is renewed interest in documentary evidence for this period, studies of the seals and coins of the early Islamic and of the Byzantine and Persian empires and papyrology. In 1980s and especially the first decade of the 21stcentury numerous scholars began working actively in Arabic papyrology. There wereoutstanding developments in the study of the archaeology of the early Islamic period.

However,a number of archaeological explorations in the 1970s were conducted along broader lines, especially in Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen. This work has aided in amending serious misconceptions about the historical evolution of the Levant, especially, during the early Islamic period. For example, it was earlier thought that the rise of Islam coincided with a general collapse of prosperity. However, Donald Whitcomb, Alan Walmsley, and others believed that many areas in the Levant continued to flourish during the 7th and 8thcenturies. According to Peter Pentz, the rise of Islam, rather than being seen as an episode of violent destruction and discontinuity was an 'invisible conquest' because at most sites in the Levant the transition from Byzantine to Islamic rule was so gradual that it wasunnoticeable. The origin of Islam came to be seen in the light of new works and the new evidence, and novel interpretations of longknown literary evidence, resulted in the appearance of many new efforts to reconstruct 'what actually happened' on the eve of the origin of Islam. A lot of revisionist writings emerged which were away from the traditional paradigm. Many new theories were proposed in these writings. A few of them claim that

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[2]Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formations*, Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2001, p.331

Islam was merely another form of Christianity; while some even questioned the presence of Prophet Muhammad. However, all these are not supported by enough research and seem mere speculations.

Self-Check Exercise

11. Who propounded the Meccan Trade Hypothesis pertaining to the rise of Islam?
12. Name the historian who gave the Nativist Theory of rise of Islam?
13. Name any one revisionist historian of the rise of Islam.
14. Which historian opined that the rise of Islam, rather than being seen as an episode of violent destruction and discontinuity was an 'invisible conquest'?

7.3 Summary

- The rise of Islam was the most significant event in the Arabian Peninsula. It also had far reaching impact across the globe.
- Muhammad of the Quraysh tribe of Arabia became the chief messenger (Prophet) ofthe revelations of God and brought the scattered tribes of the Arabian Peninsula under one polity.
- Muhammadpreached that every true believer in Islam has certain ritual obligations to perform in his life—Declaration of Faith (*Shahda*), Daily Prayers (*Salat*), Alms (*Zakat*), Fasting (*Saum*) and Pilgrimage (*Hajj*). These are called as Five Pillars of Islam.
- Apart from these there are Six Articles of Faith in Islam— Monotheism (*Tawhid*), Belief in the Angels, Belief in the Prophets and Messengers, Belief in the Holy Books, Belief in the Day of Judgment and Belief in Predestination
- The reasons behind the rapid expansion of Islam has been a topic of debate among the historians. Scholars, such as, W.M Watt, M.Rodinson and Marshal Hodgson have proposed a popular theory called as Meccan Trade Hypothesis.
- According to this theory the increasing Meccan trade and the resultant property inequality in Meccan society led to social tension. Prophet Muhammad's attempt to bring social unity in the form of *ummah*and preaching equality through Islam was the reason for the popularity of Islam and Islamic state formation in the Arabian Peninsula.
- However, Patrician Crone has rejected this hypotheis and argues that the Meccan trade mostly dealt with low value goods which were incapable of generating much wealth to create such large economic inequalities.
- Nativist Theory propounded by Patricia Croneemphasize that the success of the Prophet lay more in unifying the Arab tribes than in the increasing 'richness in trade'.
- Historian Fred Donner conducted an extensive survey of the revisionist works being done on the subject of origin of Islam. His integration of early Islamic history in the context of Late Antiquity broadened the viewpoint of historians on early Islam.

7.4 Glossary

- ***Hadis/Hadith*:** A narrative record of the sayings or customs of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- ***Khutba:*** A sermon preached by an imam in a mosque at the time of the Friday noon prayer
- ***Qiblah:*** It is the direction that Muslims face when they make prayer or *salat*. This would be towards the Kaaba.
- ***Ramadan:*** The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, during which fasting is required from just before dawn until sunset.
- **Trance:** A sleeplike state usually characterized by partly suspended animation with diminished or absent sensory and motor activity.
- ***Ummah*:** It refers to the entire Muslim community.

7.5 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Prophet Muhammad was born in 570 CE in Mecca.
2. Quraysh tribe
3. The "*Hijrah*", also Hijrat or Hegira, is the migration or journey of the *Islamic* prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina. It is the beginning of the Islamic calendar and was determined to be July 16, 622 CE.
4. 624 CE
5. 632 CE
6. A small stone building in the court of the Great Mosque at Mecca that contains a sacred black stone. It is the goal of *hajj* and the point toward which Muslims turn in praying.
7. *Fajr*, *Zuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib* and *Isha*.
8. It is an Islamic term referring to the obligation that an individual has to donate a certain proportion of wealth each year to charitable causes.
9. In Islam, any religious fast, but especially the fast of the month of Ramadan is called as *Saum*. Its purpose is to practice self-restraint, piety, and generosity.
10. According to the Quran, on the Day of Judgment this entire universe will come to an end. Then the dead will be resurrected and accounts taken of their deeds.
11. W.M Watt
12. Patricia Crone
13. Fred Donner
14. Peter Pentz

7.6 Suggested Readings

1. Abdalaatil, Hammudah, *Islam in Focus*, Delhi: Crescent Publishing Company, 1988.
2. Ahmad, Khurshid, ed,*Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, Leicester, England: The Islamic Foundation, 1980.

3. Cragg, Kenneth, *The House of Islam*, Belmount, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1975.
4. Crone, Patricia, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
5. Fazlur, Rahman, *Islam*, Chicago: University Press, 1979.
6. Geijbels, M, *An Introduction to Islam*, Rawalpindi: Christian Study Centre, 1977.
7. Khirshid, Ahmad, *Islam, Its Meaning and its Message*, New Delhi, 1977.
8. Lapidus, Ira M, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Second Edition, 2002.
9. Rodinson, Maxime, *Mohammed*, New York: New Press, 1961.

7.7 Terminal Questions

1. Write an essay on the life of Prophet Muhammad.
2. Trace Prophet Muhammad's rise to power.
3. Elaborate the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.
4. Examine the factors that led to the growth of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad.
5. Discuss the causes oforigin of Islam with special reference to the historiography of the event.
6. Briefly explain the salient points of Meccan Trade Theory.
7. What is the argument of Nativist Theory propagators on the origin of Islam?
8. Discuss the views of Revisionist historians on the origin of Islam.



CHAPTER-8
EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE—I

Structure:

8.0 Introduction

The death of Prophet Mohammed in 632 CE created a political and religious vacuum. It was a grave crisis for Islam as well as the newly formed Arabian state. Muhammad had taught that he was the last in the chain of the Prophets, including the Prophets of Judaism and Christianity, sent by God to show the right path to humanity. So no one could assume the position of Prophet after him. However, there was a pressing need of a person of authority to take the physical charge of the state and guide the religious community. Due to lack of clarity and agreement on the issue of succession, there was a real dangerof disintegration of the Muslim community. As a resultthe institution of Caliph came into existence. The Caliph was the head of Islamic State and was also vested with religious authority in the absence of a separate priesthood in Islam.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Learn how the institution of Caliphate came into existence,
- Know about the rule of the first four Caliphs—Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali.

8.1 Rule of the First Four Caliphs

Following the death of the Prophet the first divisions arose among the Muslims. No one could succeed Muhammad as a Prophet. Muhammad had not designated any political successor. Broadly speaking, there were three groups which claimed the right of succession. The early supporters of Muhammad, the *muhajiruns* (of Mecca) and the *ansars*put forward their claim

that since they helped Muhammad at the time of crisis after the *hijrat* of 622 CE, therefore they should be allowed to choose the successor. However, the group of people known as *Alids* (legitimists) argued that sucession should take place in the family of Muhammad. Since the Prophet had no surviving male heir, this faction desired Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad (husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima) to succeed. In addition to this, he was one of the *muhajiruns*. Finally, there was a politically powerful group of Quraysh aristocracy known as Umayyads who wanted to have their own say in the succession. In the end, after a prolonged discussion Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad's senior companions and his father-in-law (father of Aisha, another wife of Muhammad) was chosen as the Caliph (from *Khalifa* or successor) of Muhammad. The Caliph was supposed to act like a Sheikh or chief and not as a Prophet and was supposed to lead the *ummah*, act as an arbiter in disputes and follow the precedents (*Sunna*) set by Muhammad. Abu Bakr and the later three Caliphs—Umar, Usman and Ali—are regarded as *Rashidun* or 'rightly guided' or 'pious Caliphs', on account of their closeness with the Prophet.

8.1.1 Abu Bakr (632-634 CE)

Technically, Caliphate has assumed the meaning of an Islamic institution of governance based on the Quran and the *Sunnah*, which originated after the death of Prophet Muhammad to cater to the needs of the people (*ummah*) and for establishing the commandments of the *Shariat*. On the basis of the two injunctions of *Shura* (council) and the *Ijma* (consensus) Muslims elected Abu Bakr as the first Caliph. The succession of Abu Bakr, as the first Caliph was fairly smooth. Being one of Prophet Muhammad's close associates, he was widely respected. When he assumed the Caliphal leadership, the nascent Arabian state was in danger of disintegration as many of the Bedouin tribes broke away from Medina. It was due to the fact that the concept of an Arabian state was new for the nomadic people of Arabia. They were not used to the formal state institutions.A number of tribes who had joined Prophet Muhammad, particularly those far from Medina felt that their alliance would be of little use now that then Prophet was dead. Many of such tribes declared their independence and the situation turned serious when some of the powerful leaders among these proclaimed themselves as Prophets and started following their own version of Islam. Such leaders were described as 'false prophets' by the Meccan and Medinese Muslims and Abu Bakr had to wage a war against them to re-establish control over these tribes. These wars were known as *Ridda* ('return' or 'apostacy'). However, many of the tribes who Abu Bakr fought had never accepted Islam.

In 633 CE, Muslims defeated a joint tribal confederation at al-Aqraba and established their control over Eastern Arabia. It is regarded as the crucial moment in the early Islamic history in few Islamic traditions as this victory is said to have preserved a unitary state apart from strengthening the identification of Islam with the Arabs. Another important battle was the **Battle of Ajnadayn** fought on July 30, 634 CE fought with the Byzantine (Eastern Roman Empire) who had come to support the small tribes under attack by the Muslims. The Byzantine forces were defeated in this battle. This victory was very important because it was for the first time that the Arabs were fighting as a single army rather than a separate raiding tribal unit. Abu Bakr's attempt to consolidate a political federation in Arabia ultimately resulted later in a full-fledged war against the Byzantines and the Sassanids under the leadership of Umar.

Abu Bakr fell ill in 634 CE and did not recover. Before his death, he appointed Umar as the next Caliph after discussions with some companions. He had the distinction of being the first Caliph in the Islamic history to nominate a successor. He was also the only Caliph to refund to the state treasury the entire amount of allowance that he got during his tenure as Caliph.

8.1.2 Umar (634-644 CE)

After Abu Bakr's death, Umar, who was one of the earliest Meccan believers in Muhammad's prophethood, was nominated as the next Caliph.He was called **Al-Siddiq** (The Truthful) and was known by that title among later generations of Muslims.He controlled the Islamic state and the *ummah* for the next ten years. He was the real builder of the Arab empire. Under his leadership, the unification of Arabia was completed. The Arabs conquered Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The conquests of Arabs in West Asia was also facilitated by a prolonged conflict between the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires for supremacy over West Asia.This conflict had considerably weakened both these kingdoms without any substantial gains. When the Arabs undertook their invasion of Byzantine and Sassanid territories in 633-34 CE, these two powers were not able to resist the attack. In Syria, the town of Damascus was first attacked in 634 CE and captured in 636 CE. It took only two years to take Iraq from the Sassanids and to overthrow the Byzantines from Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Saad and Khalid-bin-Walid were the prominent military commanders of the Arabs. A major Sassanian army was defeated and the Lakhmid capital of Hira under the control of Sassanids was besieged and conquered by the Arabs in 636 CE. The Arabs also routed the Persian army in the **Battle of Qadisiya** in 637 CE. They also took control of the Sassanian capital Ctesiphon (called Madain by the Arabs) and Yazdagird, the last Sassanian emperor, was forced to flee and take refuge under the Turkish princes. The Arab armies got tremendous wealth as booty from the sack of this city. With this, Sassanid rule came to an end in Iraq.Jerusalem was brought under control in 638 CE. In 639 CE Egypt was invaded and by 640 CE, almost the entire country was occupied. Byzantine power in Syria was wiped out. Mosul in Iraq fell in 641 CE and the port city of Alexandria was captured in 642 CEthereby completing the conquest of Egypt, which was considered as the granary of the Eastern Roman Empire. Its proximity of Hejaz, its naval yards and its strategic location for the conquests in North Africa, made Egypt attractive to the Arabs. In the east, the Arabian army starting penetrating Iran from 642 CE. The Sassanids had withdrawn beyond the Zagros Mountains after the loss of Iraq. In the **Battle of Nehawand** in Iran, the main Sassanid army was destroyed in 642 CE. By 650 CE, the entire Iran, including the north-eastern region of Khurasan, came under the control of the Arabs. Yazdagird, the last Sassanid ruler, was killed in Khurasan in 651 CE. Thus, by the middle of the 7^{th} century, the Arab empire consisted of the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, parts of North Africa, Iraq and Iran.

Besides the decline of Byzantine and the Sassanid military power, some other factors have also been attributed by the scholars to explain the rapid expansion of the Arabs. According to Ira M.Lapidus, one of these was the rapid acceptance of the Arab rule by the people inhabiting these kingdoms as they were isolated from their earlier rulers. Historian G.E von Grunebaum

has highlighted the role of camels and horses besides weapons in the initial success of the Arabs. He points out that using their camels the Arabs could move with a great speed through the difficult terrain. Nomadic armies are capable of swift movements because they are not overloaded. The introduction of trained archers in the army, who besides carrying the traditional lance and sword, proved to be very effective against the Byzantines and the Sassanidswho were not accustomed to such determined attack from a tribal enemy. The defeats which these empires faced in their initial encounters with the Arabs further demoralized their armies. The Arabian army also depended on horses, which some of the tribes had bred for a long time a part of their traditional pattern of subsistence. The religious motivation of the Arabs that assumed the form of has also been regarded as an additional factor which contributed to their success. These conquests were secured as a consequence of migration of large number of Arabs in the regions which were earlier held by the two mighty kingdoms. Ira M.Lapidus mentions that this Arab migration was a result of centuries-long infiltration of people from Arabia into the settled areas.

After the conquests, Umar was confronted with the problem of governing these new territorial gains besides controlling the migrant Arabs. He was also required to ensure that the Bedouins do not cause any harm to the agricultural property in these areas and to formulate a mechanism through which the Meccan and Medinese elite could exploit the resources of these territories.Umar appointed governors (*amirs*) to administer these newly acquired territories. Umar evolved two principles to govern these territories. First, the Bedouins were to be prevented from attacking the settled areas and that the Arab elite would liaise with those of the conquered territories. Umar converted the Arab conquerors into an elite army who reinforced the conquered areas but prevented them from embracing professions of the conquered population either as landowners or peasants. With the purpose of segregating the Arab population from the population of the conquered territory and to avert the attack ofBedouins on the agricultural societies, the Arabs, including the Bedouins, were settled inbarracks (*amsar*). Basra,Kufa and Fustat were the prominent among these. Thefunction of the *amsar* was not confined to housing the Bedouins but it also had to organise thearmy and distribute the war booty. War booty was distributed according to the principles formulated earlier by Prophet Muhammad. One-fifthof the war booty went to the state whereas rest was distributed among the *ummah*. It alsocomprised taxes collected from the peasants and tributes paid by the people.The Arabs were only entitled to revenue from the land as war booty and not the landitself. This ensured that the conquered areas would not be plundered and war bootywould be distributed justifiably. While dispensing the war booty, Umar had to ensure thedistribution in an organised manner. Ira M.Lapidus opines that Islam was an important factor in the formation of great garrisons because the faith made the strangers keen to cooperate in a common cause. He argues that Islam aided the acceptance of the Caliphate and justified its authority.

Another important aspect of the early Arab conquest was that the invading troops were not allowed to settle on lands or own it and the peasants were left in the possession of their lands on the payment of tribute. People of the conquered lands were not forced to accept

Islam and they continued to live and work as before. Umar permitted the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians of the Middle East to keep their faith in return for a tribute called as *jizya*. The invasions had eliminated the landholding allies of the former regimes who had been passing on their share of the tax burden on to the cultivators as well as extracting their share from the total revenues. The taxation became lighter with their disappearance and the cultivator welcomed the new regime. Umar ordered that movable booty belonged partly to the soldiers but that land belonging to the former rulers and the taxes belonged to the entire community. Earlier administrators were reemployed and the conquered people were permitted to live according to their own laws. Umar's policy simplified the process of establishing control over the newly conquered areas. He then used them as a base to push further. He did not let his armies settle on the land. The economic and social structure of these lands was left uninterrupted and economic activity continued. Umar did not force people of the conquered lands to accept Islam. The differing religious communities were given a status of *zimmis* who had to pay *kharaj* and poll tax but did not have to fight for the state.

Umar used the Islamic calendar for administrative work. However, he did not alter the social and administrative structure of the conquered areas. The local elites were integrated and were made part of the new Arab regime, the old landowners, chiefs and village headmen were permitted to retain their authority and they continued to extract taxes. The old elite was allowed to retain their power with autonomy and to administer their territory. The Arabs collected a fixed amount of tribute from these notables in return.

Umar projected the military and religious authority of the Caliph under his regime. He declared himself as *Amir-al-Muminin* (Commander of the Faithful) and acted as the commander of the Arabian troops. As far as the religious field is concerned, Umar regulated the Islamic rituals. Prayers were supposed to be offered collectively in the mosques. He also initiated the writing down of the text of Quran. He also introduced the new Islamic era which began from 622 CE, the year of *hijra* i.e. migration of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.

The early Caliphate, however, faced difficulties as a result of division between the Muslim community of Arabia and the tribal forces of Arabs that were instrumental in conquering the territories in the Middle East.This division arose from the fact that the Muslims and the Arabs had contradictory concepts regarding Caliphate. While organising the Islamic Empire in the Arabian Peninsula, Umar preferred the Meccan and Medinese supporters of Prophet Muhammad whereas in the garrison towns, he preferred those who had helped the Medina-based state in the Arabian wars and who had been the early participants in the Arabian quest to capture Middle Eastern territories. The latter were offered governorship and generalship besides important administrative posts with high salaries. This led to disappointment among the Meccan elite consisting chiefly Quraysh elite. The problem further arose when continuous emigration from Arabian Peninsula led to arrival of large and prestigious clans to these garrison towns. They started demanding their own share in the power which resulted in a fierce conflict of interest. Umar was not able to resolve this conflict. In 644 CE, he was killed by an Irani who had a personal grievance against him.

8.1.3 Usman (644-656 CE)

Umar hadappointed a council of six to select his successor after him. The members of the council were not to name anyone from among themselves as the Caliph. Usman was chosen by the council as the thirdCaliph. He was one of the *muhajirun* but he belonged to the Umayyad clan. After becoming Caliph, he started favouring the Umayyad and other Meccan clans at the expense of the original supporters (*muhajiruns* and *ansars*), thus reversing Umar's policies. He made himself unpopular by giving important government positions to the members of the Umayyad clan and the revenues of conquered territories were redistributed to favour the newly migrant large clans. For achieving this objective, Usman emphasised greater control over the provincial revenues and asked for a closer accounting of the lands that earlier belonged to the Persian rulers.

In religious matters too, Usman tried to have his way by standardizing the text of the Quran for the sake of unity. According to Ira M.Lapidus, by doing this Usman he wanted to reassert the pre-Islamic coalition of Meccan and Arabian tribal aristocrats against the new elements created by Islam, and claimed an enlarged authority for the Caliph to cause social, economic and religious changes. This caused considerable indignation from Hashimites, the original supporting clan of Prophet Muhammad. They were aggrieved by the favouritism shown by Usman towards the Umayyads.

There was no substantial territorial expansion under Usman by the Arabs after 650 CE, except establishing complete control over Iran. However, there was a variation in the policy of the Arabstowards the conquered lands. With the consolidation of their power, the Arabs wanted to increase their control over the local areas. The policy ofArabs towards the provinces differed from one province to the other. For example, in Mesopotamia and Syria, ignoring the previous agreements, the Arabs insisted on payment of taxes (instead of tribute) in direct proportion of the population and resources of the areas. Urban and rural administration was also separated in these areas thus ending the era of city-states and instead Mesopotamia and Syria were placed under the provincial bureaucracy. In Iraq and Egypt, the earlier centralised bureaucracy was replaced by the new Arab bureaucracy. The Sassanian crown land was confiscated and made the Caliphal domain. The administrative system was simplified in Egypt by abolishing the division of financially independent estates and municipalities as separate units of administration

It was also during Usman's period that the first serious divisions occurred in Islam. He did not break from the policies of Umar of building a strong centralised authority. To ensure loyalty of his governors and administrators he began appointing members of his clanto important government posts. This meant that some Meccan families became powerful who had been one of the most hostile enemies of Muhammad. Umar's restrictions on Arabs owning property outside of the peninsular were also disregarded and some privileged families were permitted to establish large estates. Usman did not possessed Umar's administrative and political skills. There was injustice, improvisations in administration and financial irregularities. This was exploited by Usman's opponents including supporters of Ali who desired to see him as Caliph since the

death of Prophet Muhammad. However, it cannot be denied that it was the religious idealism of Ali which was shocked at the way in which Muhammad's legacy was being abused for the advantage of a few. Discontent also grew among the different tribal groups who felt they were being deprived of their rightful share. The last straw was when payment of pensions became irregular. The opposition to Usman finally resulted in his murder by a group of Muslims from Fustat in 656 CE.

8.1.5 Ali (656-661 CE)

Usman's murder marks the culmination of one phase of the formation of the Arab empire. There was another succession dispute which created conditions of a virtual civil war in the Islamic Empire. Although Ali (656-661 CE) became the next Caliph with the help of his supporters at Medinawho had joined hands with rebels from Egypt who were instrumental in the murder of Usman, he had to face opposition from many quarters. As a Caliph, Ali was opposed to the centralizing tendencies of the Caliphate which was established by Usman in relation to the distribution of taxes and tribute from the outside provinces. He followed the policy of equal distribution of these among the Arabs.

Ali was a cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad. He was also one of the earliest converts to Islam. His intimacy with the Prophet and his devotion to Islam were made the basis of his claim to the position of Caliphate after Usman's death. However, his accession was opposed by many groups in Arabia leading to the civil war. The Umayyads were the first to oppose Ali. Another faction led by Zubayr, an associate of Muhammad, and Muhammad's widow Aisha also opposed Ali. She accused Ali for not avenging Usman's murder and further joined Ali's former associates in open rebellion and was actually present in the battlefield at the time of clash between the two forces. The fiercest opposition, however, came from Muawiya, the governor of Syria, who was a descendent of Umayya and Usman's cousin. Muawiya had a large support base among the Arabs of Syria. He openly revolted against Ali. In order to subdue Muawiya, Ali had shifted his capital from Medina to Kufa in Iraq. He had a large following at this place. All regions had recognized Ali as the Caliph except for Syria. Ali undertook a military campaign from Kufa to Syria in order to seek Muawiya's submission. A battle was fought between the armies of Ali and Muawiya in 657 CE at a place called Siffin in northern Mesopotamia. The battle was inconclusive and after a series of negotiations and arbitrations, Muawiya became the de facto ruler of Syria whereas Ali ruled the rest of the Arabian Empire from Kufa.

The events following Ali's withdrawal from Siffin provoked a permanent political and sectarian division in Islam. There was a group which maintained that Ali was divinely endowed with leadership qualities by the virtue of his being connected to the family of Prophet Muhammad and being the true successor. He was incapable of making any error. This group was known as *Shiah* (meaning 'party' and here implies the 'party of Ali'). The adherents of this party are called as the *Shiites.* They had unquestioning faith in Ali and fully endorsed his actions at Siffin. On the other hand there was a breakaway group called *kharijis*or seccessionists (the kharijis had seceded from Ali) which were opposed to any arbitration between Ali and Muawiya. Although

the *kharijis* were defeated in the battle, the support of Muslims for Ali started decreasing and the opponents demanded the establishment of a council (*shara*) for the election of a new Caliph. Ali rejected this demand but opposition to Ali increased as the tribal chiefs of Kufa failed to support him. The *kharijis* continued to be a source of trouble for the Arab state for the next fifty years. They harassed the government in different parts of the empire. These civil wars made the Islamic Empire vulnerable to disintegration. The *kharijis* advanced their own religious interpretations and their doctrines which influenced the development of Islamic theology. The opinion started growing favour of Muawiya to be made the next Caliph on the grounds that he was had a disciplined army and also that he could maintain the unity of the Arabs as well as control over the empire. Ali was assassinated by a *khariji* in 661 CE. Muawiya declared himself as the Caliph. There was an attempt to promote the candidature of Ali's eldest son Hasan, but the Shiites could not muster enough support. The civil war before Ali's death created permanent schism within the Muslims. Those who supported the accession of Muawiya as the Caliph came to be called as the *Sunni Muslims*whereas those who believed that only the descendants of Ali had the legitimate right over the position of Caliphate were known as *Shias*.

Self-CheckExercise

1. What do you mean by the term *Rashidun*?
2. Who was the first Muslim Caliph?
3. What was Ridda?
4. When was the Battle of Ajnadayn fought?
5. Which Caliph was known as Al-Siddiq (The Truthful)?
6. When was the Battle of Qadisiya fought?
7. Who started the hijri era?
8. Who was the third Caliph in Islam?
9. When was Caliph Usman murdered?
10. Who was the last Rashidun Caliph?
11. How long did the first Caliphate last?
12. Why did Islam split into Sunni and Shia?

8.2 Summary

- Death of Prophet Muhammad was followed by a dispute for succession between the early supporters of Muhammad (muhajiruns and ansars), Alids or legitimists and the Umayyads.
- After a long deliberation, Abu Bakr (632-34 CE) was selected as the Caliph (successor) of Muhammad. Abu Bakr and the later three Caliphs, Umar, Usman and Ali, are together known as Rashidun.
- The period of Abu Bakr's Caliphate was marked by the threat of disintegration from the various tribes. Some of the tribal chiefs declared them to be Prophet and Abu Bakr had to wage war (Ridda) against them.

- It was under Abu Bakr that the Muslim community fought against the Byzantines for the first time as a single Arab army rather than a tribal unit.
- Abu Bakr was succeeded by Umar (634-44 CE) who is regarded as the Arab Empire builder because it was under his rule that the entire Arabian Peninsula was unified and the phase of Arab conquest of the Middle East began.
- By 643 CE, the Arabs had conquered Syria, Egypt and parts of North Africa. Entire Iraq and Iran fell to the Arabs after the defeat of the Sassanids,
- The success of Arabs has also been attributed to such factors as their efficient use of camels, use of trained archers, introduction of the concept of jihad and acceptance of the Arabs by the inhabitants of these territories.
- Umar turned Arab tribal conquerors into an elite army and created garrisons (amsar) at Basra, Kufa and Fustat to settle Arabs in these territories and to prevent plunder of these areas by the Bedouins.
- Umar also followed the policy of Muhammad not to force conversion to Islam in these areas and instead collected a tribute from them called jizya.
- The local administration was also not disturbed and the local elite continued to retain their authority to collect taxes. Umar called himself Amir al-Mu'minin (commander of the faithful).
- Umar regularised the prayer of theMuslims in mosques and initiated the process of writing down of Quran. His support to the Meccan and the Medinese supporter of Muhammad by giving them important administrative and military positions led to discontentment among the Meccan elite that resulted in his assassination in 644 CE.
- Umar was succeeded by Usman (644-56 CE) who belonged to Umayyads. He reversed many of the policies of Umar by promoting Meccans against the early supporters of Muhammad.
- He also sought to establish better control over the provincial resources by centralising the authority of Caliph. Although his rule did not see much of Arab territorial expansion but an attempt was made to collect regular taxes rather than tributes.
- The taxation system was also given a definite shape under Usman. He also took to standardisation of Quran.
- The opposition of the Hashimites ultimately resulted in the assassination of Usman in 656 CE.
- After another succession dispute, Ali (656-61 CE) became the next Caliph with the help of the ansars and the rebels of Egypt.
- He was not in favour of the centralizing tendencies of the Caliph and believed in equal distribution of the tax proceeds among the Arabs.
- Ali's accession was opposed by many groups, leading to a civil war within Arabia. Conflict between his supporters (Shia) and his opponents Umayyads created the ideological schism in Islam between Shias and Sunnis.

- However, the most resolute opposition to Ali came from Muawiya. Ali had to fight a major battle at Siffin with Muawiya.
- Withdrawal of Ali brought opposition from another group of Kharijs who seceded from Ali and later killed him in 666 CE. His death brought in end to the phase of the Rashidun Caliphs in Islam.

8.3 Glossary

- **Jihad:** Literally implies "struggle." Any earnest striving in the way of God, involving personal, physical, for righteousness and against wrong-doing.
- **Jizya:** It is a per capita yearly taxation historically levied in the form of financial charge on non-Muslim subjects *(zimmi)* of a state governed by Islamic law.
- **Kharaj:** The kharaj was a land tax that was originally paid only by non-Muslims.
- **Sunnah:** In Islam, Sunnah are the traditions and practices of Prophet Muhammad, that constitute a model for Muslims to follow.
- **Shariat:** The body of canonical law based on the Quran that lays down certain duties and penalties for Muslims.
- **Zimmi:** A non-Muslim subject of a state governed according to the *sharia* who is granted the freedom to worship and is entitled to the protection of life and property by the state.

8.4 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. The *Rashidun* Caliphs or 'rightly guided' or 'pious Caliphs' often simply called the *Rashidun*, are the first four Caliphs—Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali—who led the Muslim community following the death of the Islamic Prophet.
2. Abu Bakr
3. The Ridda Wars ('Apostasy Wars' or 'Rebellion Wars') were a series of military campaigns launched by the Caliph Abu Bakr against the rebel Arabian tribes during 632 and 633 CE, just after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.
4. July 30, 634 CE.
5. Umar
6. 637 CE
7. The second Caliph Umar.
8. Usman
9. 656 CE
10. Ali
11. The time period under the leadership of the Four Caliphs is called the Rashidun Caliphate which lasted for 30 years from 632 CE to 661 CE.

12. After Prophet Muhammad death in 632 CE, a group of Muslims believed that Muhammad's successor should be Abu Bakr. They were known as Sunni. However, a second group of Muslims, who came to be known as the Shia, believed that his successor should have been Ali.

8.5 Suggested Readings

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8.6 Terminal Questions

1. Who were the Rashidun Caliphs? Analyse the factors that led to expansion of the Arab Empire under Islam.
2. What is the most important contribution of the Rashidun Caliphate? Explain.
3. Write a short note on the first Muslim Caliph Abu Bakr.
4. HowUmar consolidated the Islamic state?
5. Discuss the achievements of Usman.
6. Give a brief account of the period of Caliphate of Ali.



CHAPTER-9
EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE—II

Structure:

9.0 Introduction

Muawiyah I, a descendent of the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh tribe, established the Umayyad dynasty (661-750 CE) with Damascus (Syria) as its capital.The accession of Muawiyah to the position of Caliph signaled the beginning of a monarchial rule based on Islamic principles.Before his death, aware of the wars of succession in the past, Muawiyah choose his son Yazid as successor, hence transformed Islamic state from Caliphate to kingship (*Mulk*) based on hereditary succession. He held the position of Caliph from 661 to 680 CE and all the Caliphs following him belonged to the Umayyad clan. Thus, the duration between 662 CE and 750 CE is known as the period of **Umayyad Caliphate**.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Know about Muawiyah and Dynastic Rule,
- Identify the factors leading to the decline of the Umayyads.

9.1 The Umayyad Caliphate

A number of historiansview the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate as an abandoning of the original ideals of Islam as a theocratic community and its replacement by secular kingship. Thus, it is believed that Islamic ideal with regards to social and political organisation, was discarded by the Muawiyah when he established his family as the rulers of an Arab dynasty. However, there was no clearly formulated theory of Caliphate. The first three caliphs had been chosen by differing methods. Their legitimacy rested on the acceptance of their authority by the families in Medina along with Muslims in other places. The first four Caliphs were all a part of the Quraysh tribe. The maintenance of the unity of the expanding empire by means of effective centralized control was vital. The political unity of the Muslims provided by the Umayyads enabled

the Muslims to harp on and elaborate upon the inner meanings of the Quranand it was the stability of the Islamic state that facilitated itsspread among Muslims over a span of many generations.

9.1.1 Muawiyah and Dynastic Rule

Muawiyah proclaimed himself Caliph at Damascus and ruled from 661 to 680 CE. He restored the centralised power of the Muslim state, which had been established by Umar and seriously challenged during the Caliphate of Ali. Muawiyah was not much dependent on the approval of the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina. His Syrian troops and revenue gave him the required power to proclaim his authority. The Arabs supported him too because they dreaded dissidence and political disunity. Muawiyah callously suppressed political disobedience for the sake of unity of Islam.

Khurasan was conquered again and a number of new garrison towns were established to maintain the individuality of the Arab governing class. Muslim armies made further inroads into eastern Iran and Oxus valley. Constantinople was besieged unproductively. He compensated the Arab chiefs by launching a fresh military campaign towardsNorth Africa and Eastern Iran. Muawiyah was an efficient administrator and he continued the policy of discouraging conversion.

Muawiyah worked as an autocratic monarch. The ideal of kingship as an ideal was repugnantfor the Arabs and therefore Muslim rulers continued to refer to themselves as Caliphs (Viceroys of the Prophet). However, Muawiyah was mindful of the harm that conflicts over succession could impose on the Islamic state. He therefore reinforced the concept of hereditary succession by naming his son Yazid as the heir.

Yazid (680-683 CE) became the Caliph after his father's death.He was very much preoccupied with challenges to his authority to maintain the momentum of expansion. The Shiites, the Kharijis and the old Muslim families of Mecca and Medina refused to accept the principle of dynastic succession. The supporters of Ali (Shiites) at Kufah made a fresh claim for Ali's younger sonHusayn (Hasan had died in 669 CE) and a grandson of the Prophet, to the position of Caliph. Husayn's supporters could mobilizeonly a small force for armed resistance against the Umayyads. A battle was fought at Karbala (Iraq) in 680 CE. Husayn's forces were defeated and massacred along with Husayn. The slaying of Husayn brought him martyrdom. His shrine at Karbala is presently an important pilgrimage centre of the Shias. This event is observed every year as a period of mourning during the Islamic month of **Muharram**, i.e. the month in which the battle of Karbala occurred.



Muharram Procession

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Muharram#/media/File:Grief_of_yore_and_gore-Muharram_procession_in_Hyderabad._01.jpg

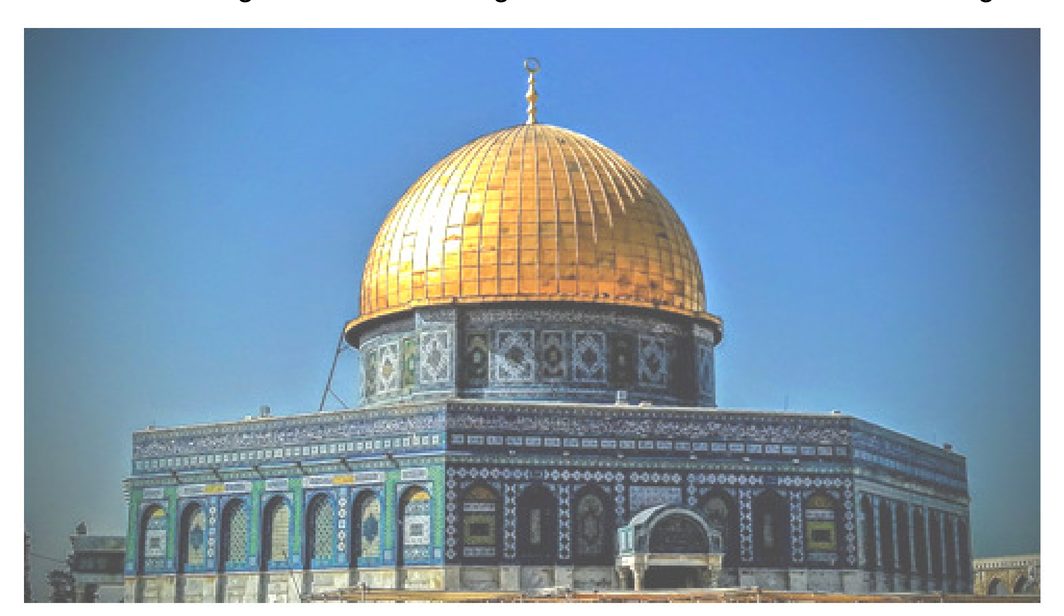
The killing of a kin of the Prophet had a tremendous emotional impact. Besides the Shiites and the Kharijis, several sections of the people of Medina rose in revolt. Yazid hardly had any time to settle down.Abdullah Ibn Zubayr, another Meccan aspirant who gained support in Arabia and Kufa emerged as the leader of the resistance against Yazid and he proclaimed himself Caliph in 684 CE with his capital at Medina. However, the reality of his authority was restricted. A number of dissident groups were active. The Kharajite movement established a short-lived egalitarian and puritanical rule in central Arabia in 684 CE. The Shia (party) of Ali also became active in Kufah and they gave the non-Arab converts to Islam (*mawali*) an equal right in booty. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr suppressed this regime. His authority also extended beyond Arabia and comprised Egypt and Iraq. The Berbers of North Africa rebelled against the Umayyads. According to Jonathan Berkey, these developments established two important facts. Firstly, Islam until this time was still grounded in Arab identities as the warring groups fought over the issue of which family of the Quraysh tribe would have the right to lead the new polity. Secondly, with different claimants to the title of 'commander of believers' spread out through Syria, Iraq and Arabia, it was difficult to speak of a unified Muslim polity.

However, the leadership of the Umayyads was assumed by another branch of the clan. This was the family of the Marwan (683-685 CE), a cousin of Muawiyah. His son Abd al Malik (685-705 CE) defeated the Medinan challenge and in the process the Kaaba was damaged. Abd al Malik rebuilt the Umayyad state, strengthened the Caliphate and extended the borders of the empire. Heappointed Al Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf, a vigorous administrator, as a governor of Iraqand eastern provinces of the empire. Hallaj increased investment into the irrigation of the Sawad in Iraq and encouraged economic development. He ruled the area with an iron hand and suppressed all dissidence till his death in 714 CE.

The Caliphate became an absolute monarchy under Abd al Malik. The political and military power was concentrated in the hands of a small ruling elite presided over by the Caliph. The Caliph wielded supreme authority. Abd al Malik devised a bureaucratic apparatus for governing the empire. The period also witnessed the growth of a long standing army, replacing the league of tribal contingents. The earlier tribal units under the command of *rais al-qabila* were converted into regular regiments (*junds*) commanded by *qaids* (military commanders) who were not tribal chiefs. This was an effort to dissolve tribal loyalties within the army and impact a professional character into it.A number of features which had survived from former Byzantine and Sassanid regimes were abandoned. Abd al Malik vigorously pursued the policy of arabization. There was a change in administrative language from Greek (used by Byzantines) and Persian or Pahlavi (used by the Sassanids) to Arabic by Abd al Malik. Uniformity in the reciting of the Quran was enforced. An innovative and distinctive coinage with Islamic inscriptions was introduced. The new coins carried no portraits but only had some written texts engraved on them. The text was inscribed in Arabic and comprised words from the Quran.

Abd al Malik's reign was also a period of hectic building activity. A number of mosques and palaces were constructed in the main cities of the empire. The Dome of the Rock (near *Al Aqsa* mosque) was the first major Islamic monument at the site of an ancient Hebrew temple at

Jerusalem built in 692 CE. The magnificent dome on this mosque defined a new architectural expression which became one of the most important elements of Islamic architecture. In order to settle disputes among the Muslims,judges (*qazis*) were appointed to various garrison cities. Islam continued to be regarded an Arab religion and conversions were discouraged.



Dome of the Rock

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Dome_of_the_Rock#/media/File:Dome_of_the_rock-.jpg

Abd al Malik was succeeded by Al-Walid (705-715 CE). Like his predecessorAl-Walid also embarked upon a new phase of territorial expansion. The areas lost during the last civil wars were recovered. Significant conquests occurred in northern Africa and western Mediterranean. Egypt was utilized as the launching pad for campaigns in the western parts of northern Africa. The entire stretch of northern Africa, from the western borders of Egypt to the Atlantic coast was called as 'the Maghrib' by the Arabs. It comprises present-day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

The Arabs started invading Maghrib in the latter half of the 7th century and by the end of the century they had occupied the Roman province of Africa called Ifriqiya. Qayrawan, which was founded in 670 CE, was the main garrison town of the Arabs in Ifriqiya. It became the first Arab urban centre in Maghrib. By the beginning of the 8th century, the entire Maghrib came under the Umayyad rule. Several Berber tribes adopted Islam and got arabized. The Umayyad armies invaded Western Europe in 711 CE. The Visigoths were displaced from Spain, which was incorporated into the Arab empire. However, the Franks checked the further advance into Europe.The Muslim armies penetrated into Sindh in the east where the Buddhist mercantile classes had converted to Islam. Expansion also continued into central Asia till the Caliphate came to share a boundary with China. Thus, by the middle of the 8th century, the Arab empire under the Umayyads had spread to the whole of the Near East, Egypt, North Africa and parts of the Mediterranean.

The power of the Umayyads was primarily based on Syrian support. The surplus produced in Syria facilitated the Umayyads to extend their authority. In the Marwanid region, the agricultural produce of the fertile tract lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates in southern Iraq was another significant part of the Umayyad economy. In southern Iraq, the provincial government of Al-Hajjaj emphasized on the improvement of irrigation works in southern Iraq.

During this period, administrative and political unity in the empire was successfully imposed. The Arabs were transformed from an army of occupation into a ruling class. The Caliphal state had succeeded in centralization because it had attempted to directly control the economic resources of the empire. It made no concessions to the displaced privileged aristocrats of the former regimes. It was able to implement a more equitable system of taxation, which was welcomed by the people in general. The pursuit of an equitable tax policy also led to a poll tax on the individualcalled as *jizya*. The earlier regimes had imposed this tax but they had exempted the powerful. Now only the Arabs were exempted. Others could evade this tax by conversion and thus attachment to all Arab tribe as a client (*mawla* or plural *mawali*) of the Muslim Arab at whose hands the conversion occurred. The *mawali* were given an inferior social status. Patricia Crone, explaining the reasons for the inferior status given to the *mawali*argues that in the beginning of the Umayyad rule, a majority of the converts were war captives who had been turned into slaves. Later on, many of these were converted to Islam and accorded a low status in the Muslim society. However, a large number of *mawali*were incorporated into the Arab administration, army and government. As a result, the exclusiveness of Arabs ended and *mawali* started demanding equality of status and privileges with the original Muslim community. The non-Muslims were given the status of *Zimmis* who paid a poll tax but did not have to fight for the state.

9.1.2 The Decline of the Umayyads

The economic requirements of the state continued to grow. The pressure on the peasantryalso increased. Tensions appeared as the Arabs conquered lands and there was rise ofabsentee landlords and rural intermediaries between the producers and the state. It had been easy to rule the Arabs while they were isolated in garrison cities away from the subject population. Non-Arabs started migrating to the booming cities and becoming Muslims and the segregation between the Arabs and non-Arabs began to blur.

The garrison towns started losing their military nature. The growing wealth of these cities encouraged commerce. Commercial activity became as rewarding as war booty and there was an increasing unwillingness to be a part of military campaigns. Thus, the conquering Arabs started becoming civilians and the social and economic problems of the civilians were beginning to touch them. The garrison towns now played a role different to the original one assigned to them. From instruments of segregation they now became centres of integration. The state had become militarily weak which made it difficult to administer the far-flung regions of the empire. Taking advantage of this situation, a few commanders made themselves powerful in the areas where they were posted.

The increasing number of conversions had severe repercussions. The *mawali*resented their status as second-class citizens and this resentment was successfully exploited by the opponents of the government. There was an increase in the religious criticism of the Umayyads by the Arabian Muslims during the reign of Al Walid. The adoption of the showy culture and luxurious life styles of the former Byzantine ruling classes by the Arab elite was criticized by those who believed that the Islamic state should be setting standards more in conforming to Islamic ideals and principles.

During the reign of Sulayman (715-717 CE), a sadistic and pleasure loving Caliph, these critics got further incitement. There were increasing tribal conflicts during his reignbetween the two main rival provinces. By backing the Syrian based group he compelled the groups based in Iran and the eastern parts of the empire to unite in their opposition. The Shias, who were the most blatant opponents of the Umayyads, had their base in Iraq. The severe suppression of dissent by Abd al Malik's lieutenant Hallaj had left behind a history of resentment.

During the reign of Umar II (717-20 CE), these conflicts assumed serious proportions. He followed a pragmatic approach by giving equal status to the Arabs and the non-Arabs with the purpose of maintaining Muslim unity. His policy of taxation exempted the Arab converts from the payment of *jizya*. However, he imposed a Muslim alms tax called as *sadaqat*, on all Muslims. However, the other Umayyad rules wavered between tax concessions and tax cancellations as well as between settlement with the demands and maintenance of status quo. This created circumstances for the third round of civil war between the Muslims.

During Umar's reign, the state's resources were clearly depleted. His failure to take Constantinople cost a lot of wealth, manpower and prestige of Caliph. He attempted to deal with the growing religious criticism of the Umayyads by means of piety and reconciliation. The families of Medina were re-granted a special status. Efforts were made to reconcile the Shiites and the Kharajite opponents. In Egypt, the Church lands were exempted from taxation and excessive and illegal taxes were abolished. The taxes already collected were reimbursed. Honest and capable officers were appointed in the provinces. He attempted to reduce the discontent in Iraq byeliminating the Syrian troops and he gave the provinces more control over their revenues.

The established policy was reversed by Umar II as heencouraged the *zimmis* to convert and thus enlarged the governing class. He attempted to use Islam as an ideology to unite the empire by applying its principles uniformly to all the Muslims. However, this meant framing a biased policy against those who did not convert. The Arab's had paid one-tenth tithe on their land while the non-Muslims had to pay the much greater *Kharaj*. The Muslims were required to pay the *Zakat* (legal alms) and the non-Muslims paid *jiziya*. With Muslims gaining land and non-Muslim cultivators converting, state collections declined. Al Hallaj had asserted that all the original kharaji lands would continue to pay the higher rate regardless of the religion of the cultivators. The rich Arabs resented this. Umar II brought about a compromise according to which lands acquired by Muslims or those lands whose owners converted after the year 100 A.H. (*Hijri*) would have to pay *kharaj* and would no longer be exempted.

Yazid II (720-724) succeeded Umar II. Under Hisham (724-743 CE) strong rule was restored once again. There was an increase in taxation to meet the requirements of the state. The Umayyad aristocracy was reluctant to relinquish either their privileges or the large subsidies they received from the state. The state invested in the irrigation systemfor enhancing its income. He improved the tax collection system by expanding the bureaucracy. His strict fiscal policies led to popular discontent. He was also an autocrat. Resentment in Iraq against the Syrian rule rose again. There was a rebellion of Shias but it was suppressed.

There were attempts for expansion for the requirement of resources. In 738 CE, thegovernor of Spain, Abd al Rahman, sacked Bordeaux and almost reached Paris. The Berbers who had given the manpower for the expansion in this area and who had all converted to Islam resented the subordinated status assigned to them by the Arabs. This province was in rebellion between 734 and 742 CE which stopped any further expansion in this direction.

There was a succession of weak and dissolute rulers. Al Walid II (743-44 CE) was blasphemous and debauched. He played one tribal faction against the other for his survival. He was murdered by his kinsmen and was followed by Yazid III who ruled only for one year. There were factional fights among the ruling class. He was also compelled to reduce the salary of the soldiers. Umayyad amirs started imposing illegal tributes over the areas they were appointed and it further crippled the power of the state.

Marwan II (744-50 CE), the last ruler of the Umayyads, acquired power at the age of sixty. Trouble for the Umayyads continued during his reign. There was popular discontent in all provinces. There were serious rebellions in Syria. The Kharajites rose in rebellion in Iraq. The Shia activists took advantage of the growing unrest. Their propaganda was successful in Khurasan where the process of assimilation had assumed a different shape as compared to the rest of the empire. The Arab troops here were not confined to garrison towns but were allowed to spread out among the local population. Here the former feudal lords, the *dihqans* had not been replaced but converted into allies by the state. Consequently, an alliance was formed between the peasants, the Arabs and the *dihqans*.

An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of the Umayyads emerged in the 740s. Till then the leadership of this movement remained underground. It worked in complete secrecy to mobilize all the forces which were opposed to the Umayyads. The Hashimites were the actual leaders of this movement. The movement was guided by the Abbasids, a branch of the Hashimites who were descendants of Al-Abbas, the paternal uncle of Prophet Muhammad. According to a theory supported by Ira M. Lapidus the Abbasid movement was reinforced by both Arabised Persians and Persianised Arabs who were ideologically united by their commitment to the family of Muhammad.

The Umayyad rule came to an end in 749-50 CE. The Khurasani army mobilized by Abu Muslim was instrumental in their downfall. Marwan II fled to Egypt and was killed there. The Abbasid Caliphate was thus established in 750 CE and Abul Abbas al-Saffah (*Al-Saffah* meaning 'the avenger') was declared the new Caliph.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who established the Umayyad dynasty?
2. What was the duration of Umayyad Caliphate?
3. When and between whom was the Battle of Karbala fought?
4. What is Muharram celebrated for?
5. What do understand by the term *mawali*?
6. Under the reign of which Caliph, the Caliphate became an absolute monarchy?
7. In which country is the Dome of the Rock located?
8. What was Maghrib?
9. Name the main garrison town of the Arabs in Ifriqiya.
10. When did the Umayyad armies invaded Western Europe?
11. Which Caliph imposed a Muslim alms tax called *sadaqat* on all Muslims?
12. Who was the last ruler of the Umayyads?

9.2 Summary

- The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE marked a new era in the development of Islamand the Arab Empire.
- Mecca and Medina lost their importance as the politico-religious centre of Islam and were replaced by Syria.
- Accession of Muawiya further deepened the differences between Shias, who believed only someone from the family of Ali had the right to become Caliph and the Sunnis who supported Muawiya.
- This period also marked the beginning of monarchical system in Islam. Succession of Muawiya's son, Yazid, at the position of Caliph led to another round of civil war which resulted in the famous Battle of Karbala (680 CE) where the Shiite forces led by Husayn were defeated and Husayn was killed.
- Marwand family rebuilt the Umayyad Caliphate. The reign of Abd al-Malik and Al-Wahid stabilised the Umayyad rule by introducing many changes in the Islamic polity.
- Caliphate was turned into an absolute monarchy. Administration became more bureaucratised and the tribal contingents were replaced by a professional army.
- Arabisation of the administration was achieved by making Arabic as the language of administration. Greek and Persian speaking officials were replaced by Arabic speaking ones to introduce organisational identity.
- Anew courtly culture developed which witnessed the prominence of scribes, court chamberlain and officials of the chancery.
- The introduction of coins with Arabic script inscribed on it and construction of building such as the 'Dome of Rock' at Jerusalem on the site of an ancient Hebrew temple were attempts to demonstrate the victory of Islam.

- This was followed by the construction of several mosques and palaces at Medina and Damascus.
- The economic requirements of the state continued to grow. The pressure on the peasantry also increased. Tensions appeared as the Arabs conquered lands and there was rise of absentee landlords and rural intermediaries between the producers and the state.
- The increasing number of conversions had severe repercussions.Conversion of non-Muslims remained a slow process due to the application of the condition of becoming a client (*mawali*) to the Muslim Arab. However, the *mawali* were given a subordinate status among the Muslim community.
- But the existence of large number of *mawali* in the Arab administration and the army brought about an end to the Arab exclusivism, and the former started demanding equal status and privileges as that of the *ummah*.
- Militarily, this period was marked by resumption of the policy of conquest which was backed by imperialistic ambitions. By the first decade of the eighth century, large parts of North African region (called Maghrib), besides Spain in the Mediterranean, were brought under the control of theArabs.
- The Umayyads were opposed by the Sunnis, who were opposed to the Caliph for assuming religious authority through political power, and the Shias, who continued to hold on to the idea of Caliphate going to the family of Ali.
- However, the biggest opposition to the Umayyads came from the Hashimites headed by the Abbasids. The Abbasids started their movement in a clandestine manner to overthrow the Umayyads.
- The excessive use of Syrian army to control the Arabs had sapped its vitality. They were gradually expelled from Transoxiana, Anatolia and Central France.
- The Umayyad rule came to an end in 749-50 CE and it was replaced by the Abbasids.
- By means of a propaganda campaign the Abbasids won the support of the elites of Khurasan. They were supported by many groups, including Yemenis, their agents at Kufa, Persian and Arabian elite.
- The Umayyad rule came to an end in 749-50 CE and it was replaced by the Abbasids.

9.3 Glossary

- **Garrison:** A group of soldiers living in or defending a town or building, or the buildings that the soldiers live in.
- **Kharaj:**A type of individual Islamic tax on agricultural land and its produce developed under the Islamic law.
- ***Zakat*:** Almsgiving. It amounted to 2.5 per cent of the total income.
- ***Zimmis*:**These were those Jews and Christians who used to live under Muslim rule. They paid a tax called Jizya and gained the right to be protected by Muslim rulers.

9.4 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Muawiyah I
2. 662 to 750 CE
3. The Battle of Karbala was fought in 680 CE between Husayn's forces and Umayyads.
4. Muharram is celebrated as the advent of the Islamic New Year. It is considered as a pious and important festival by the Muslims. It also marks the anniversary of the Battle of Karbala, where Prophet Muhammad's grandson Husayn was killed.
5. *Mawali* is the Arabic name for people all over the Islamic Empire who were not Arab but converted to Islam anyway.
6. Abd al Malik
7. Jerusalem
8. The entire stretch of northern Africa, from the western borders of Egypt to the Atlantic coast was called as 'the Maghrib' by the Arabs. It comprises present-day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.
9. Qayrawan
10. 711 CE
11. Umar II
12. Marwan II

9.5 Suggested Readings

1. Crone, Patricia and Hinds, Martin, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
2. Esposito, John L, *The Oxford History of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
3. Flood, Finbarr Barry and Necipoolu, Gulru, *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
4. Frye, Richard Nelson, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Volume 4, *From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
5. Hawting, G. R., *The First Dynasty of Islam—The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750*, London: Routledge, 2002.
6. Lapidus, Ira M, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

9.6 Terminal Questions

1. How Umayyads succeeded in establishing centralized rule?
2. Describe the growth and expansion of Islamic Empire under the Umayyads.
3. Write short note on the conflict between Husayn and Umayyads.
4. Discuss the achievements of Umayyad Caliph Abd al Malik.
5. Analyze the factors responsible for the decline of the Umayyad dynasty..

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CHAPTER-10
EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE—III

Structure:

10.0 Introduction

The Abbasid Caliphate was the second of the two great dynasties of the Muslim empire of the Caliphate.It overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate in 750 CE and ruled until it was destroyed by the Mongol invasion in 1258 CE. The Abbasids enjoyed supreme power only for about a century after which they were more of figureheads and were reduced to being figureheads by the 10th century.The Abbasid Caliphate oversaw the golden age of Islamic culture. It was one of the longest and most influential Islamic dynasties. For most of its early history, it was the largest empire in the world. It had contact with distant neighbours such as the Chinese and Indians in the East, and the Byzantines in the West, allowing it to adopt and synthesize ideas from these cultures.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to,

- Understand the meaning of Abbasid Revolution,
- Examine the rule of early Abbasids,
- Know about the Islamic Golden Age,
- Analyze the causes of the decline of the Abbasids.

10.1 The Abbasid Caliphate

In 750 CE, the Umayyad dynasty was overthrown by another family of Meccan origin, the Abbasids. The Abbasids distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their

moral character and administration. In particular, they appealed to *mawali*, who were outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were regarded as a lower class within the Umayyad Empire.The Abbasid dynasty descended from Prophet Muhammad's youngest uncle, Abbas IbnAbd al-Muttalib (566–653 CE), from whom the dynasty derived its name. Muhammad IbnAli, a great-grandson of Abbas, started a campaign for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashimites, in Persia during the reign of Umayyad Caliph Umar II.

10.1.1 The Abbasid Revolution

The Abbasid takeover of the Caliphate has been called as the '**Abbasid Revolution**' in Islamic historiography. Historian Jonathan Porter Berkey believes that the Abbasid movement was a direct response to the religious turmoil of the mid-8th century but its success changed the political and religious terrain and the succeeding Abbasid Caliphs and their supporters attuned to the changed circumstances by constructing new justification to their rule.He further argues that the upheaval that resulted in the seizure of power by the Abbasid should not be simply labelled as *coup d' etat*by means of which one ruling family replaced another. Ideologically, the Abbasids movement was directed towards the restoration of an ideal Muslim order relatedto Prophet Muhammad rather than any revival of Iranian culture and identity despite the fact that they were supported by a few *mawali* of the Iranian origin.

The Abbasid Dynasty overthrew the preceding Umayyad Dynasty. The Umayyads had become increasingly unpopular and they favoured Syrian Arabs over other Muslims and *mawali* were given inferior social status. The most numerous group of *mawali*were the Persians, who lived alongside Arabs in the east who were annoyed at the favour shown to Syrian Arabs. Together, they were prepared for rebellion. Rest of the Muslims were unhappy with the Umayyads for turning the Caliphate into a hereditary dynasty. Some believed that power should not be concentrated in the hands of a single family, while Shiites were of the opinion that true authority belonged to the family of the Prophet Muhammad through his son-in-law Ali, and the Umayyads were not related to Muhammad's family.

Under the Abbasids all these different groups who were angry with the Umayyadscame together and rose in rebellion against the Umayyads in Persia. The Abbasids built a coalition of Persian *mawali*, Eastern Arabs, and Shiites. The Abbasids managed to gain the support of the Shiites because they claimed descent from Muhammad through his uncle Abbas. Their descent from Muhammad was not through Ali, as Shiites would have preferred, but Shiites still preferredthe Abbasids over the Umayyads.

Abu Muslim, a Persian general, who supported Abbasid claims to power, mobilized the Khurasaniarmies. His victories enabled the Abbasid leader AbulAbbas al-Saffah to enter the Shiite-dominated city of Kufa in 748 CE and declare himself Caliph. The army of Abu Muslim and AbulAbbas al-Saffahfaced the Umayyad Caliph Marwan II in 750 CE at the Battle of the Zab near the Tigris River. Marwan II was defeated. He fled to Egypt and was killed. Al-Saffahseized Damascus and massacred the remaining members of the Umayyad family (except for one, Abd al-Rahman, who escaped to Spain and continued the Umayyad Dynasty there). The Abbasids became the

new rulers of the Caliphate and ruled for 500 years. The 'Abbasid revolution' had far-reaching implications for Arab-Iranian-Islamic history.[1]

10.1.2 The Early Abbasids

The Abbasids had led a revolution against the unpopular policies followed by the Umayyads, but those who expected drastic change were disillusioned. Al-Saffah died in 754 CE. He was succeeded by his brother Al-Mansur (754-775 CE) who is considered as the real founder of the Abbasid Caliphate. Under his reign the Caliphate became even more of an absolutist monarchy than it had been under the Marwanids.Their alliance with the Shiites was momentary, andthe Abbasids championed Sunni orthodoxy, upholding the authority of their family over that of Ali, and continuing the suppression of the Shiites. However, the Abbasids did prove loyal to their Persian *mawali* allies. The Persian concept of kingship, combining spiritual and temporal authority, was implemented to uphold the supreme authority of the Caliph. The Abbasid court borrowed much from the Persians. The person of the Caliph became unapproachable which signified the distance between ruler and the subjects. The practice of prostration and kissing the ground before Caliph along with splendour of the Caliph's court at Baghdad emphasized the majesty of the Caliph.

One of the most importantchanges the Abbasids made was to transfer the capital of the Islamic empire from the old Umayyad power base of Damascus to a new city—Baghdad. Al-Mansur discovered that none of the existing Arabian cities could cater to his needs. So he decided to build an imposing capital for himself in southern Iraq. In 762 CE, he founded Baghdad on the banks of the Tigris River. The city was circular in shape, and designed from the beginning to be a great capital and the centre of the Islamic world. The boundaries of the city were marked by a number of gates. It remained the residence of the Abbasid Caliphs everlastingly. It grew into one of the great metropolises of the world and was perhaps the largest city of the Middle Ages.This city was located close to the old Persian capital of Ctesiphon. A number of scholars regard the founding of Baghdad as having a deeper symbolic significance whereby Al-Mansur attempted to present himself as a ruler in the tradition of the Sassanids and their Hellenistic predecessors.Berkey opines that the foundation of Baghdad as the capital also echoed the growing tension between the Abbasids and the members of the family of Ali who were strong in Kufa, which was also the early capital of the Abbasid Caliphate.

With encouragement from the Abbasid state,Baghdad grew quicklyand soon became the largest city in the world. The Persian culture that the Umayyads had attempted to suppress in Baghdad was now allowed to thrive. Science, art and poetry flourished here. The Abbasids learned the art of making paper from the Chinese soldiers which were made war captives. Cheap and durable paper became an important material for spreading literature and knowledge.

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[1]Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formations*, Revised Second Edition, anakPublicationsbPvt Ltd, New Delhi, p.351



The Abbasid Caliphate

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abbasid_Caliphate_850AD.png

10.1.3 Administration under Abbasids

The Abbasid centralized state was managed by a huge bureaucracy.The administration became more organized under the Abbasids with the division of administration into three main bureaus (*Diwans*)—revenue (*Diwan al-kharaj*), chancery (*Diwan al-rasail*) and the army (*Diwan al-jaysh*). The revenue bureau was entrusted with the responsibility of tax collection, the chancery bureau for the maintenance of records and correspondence and the army bureau was supposed to take care of the payment of the centralized army and to look after the court expenses and the payment to the pensioners. With the expansion of administration, these bureaus were further sub-divided to carry on supplementary activities. Since it became increasingly difficult to supervise these administrative branches by the Caliph, system of checks and balances was devised. With each bureau a controller's office (*Diwan al-azimma*) was attached and *barids* were appointed to provide information about all the offices in secret manner. Apart from administrative officials, the Abbasids appointed *qazis*or judges for dispensing justice.

Civil administration was unified and placed under a powerful official called as *Wazir*from the time of Al-Mansur. The office of *wazir*known as *wizarat* developed into the most characteristic institutions of the Islamic state. The *wazir* was a powerful officialgenerally well-educated and possessing a knowledge of different branches of administration including military affairs. He presided over the bureaucracy. He was expected to supervise the civil administration. It was through him that the officials communicated with the Caliph. However, it was only by the middle of the 9th century that *wazir* became the chief of administration, controlling the bureaucracy, forwarding

the names of provincial governors to the Caliph in dispensing justice. The term has at times been inaccurately termed as ‘prime minister’. Originally, close aides of the Caliph were given the title of *Wazir* and their powers varied at the pleasure of the Caliph. A few scholars claim that the *wizarat*is an institution of Persian Sassanid origin. However there are others such as S. D. Goiteinwho have questioned this view and have pointed out that we must not assume a Persian origin for *wizarat* merely because the Abbasids borrowed a lot from the Sassanids.Goitein has argued that *wizarat*was a specific product of the early Abbasid state. He asserts that the word itself is of Arabic and not Persian origin (literally *wazir*means helper in Arabic). It was first used to name the agents who were helpers or *wazirs* of the Abbasids cause.By the time of Al-Mansur it became the title of the most prominent official who assisted the Caliph. The position of *wazir*was dominated by the family of Barmekid family under the Caliphs Al-Mahdi and Harun al-Rashid.

Under the Abbasids, the provincial administration varied from direct supervision under the centralized administration to a loose control exercised by means of a military governor with the help of a garrison. The provinces located near Baghdad such as Iraq, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Western Iran were directly governed with a governor and the provincial bureaucracy working in tandem with the central government with the purpose of maximizing the payment of tax revenue from the provinces. The tenure of service of the governors was intentionally kept short and a policy of rotation guaranteed that they do not develop local support base and remain at the mercy of the Caliph. The power of the governor was further curbed by separating functions of law and order and collection of taxes and keeping of finances. The judicial function was also assigned to some other official. All these provincial officials thus kept a check on each other and a *barid* kept an eye on each of these. However, such a strict separationof civil and military functions, frequent rotation of governors and control over them was not always possible sincea number of local warlords and members of the royal family who had supported the Caliph had to be placated. Therefore, in a number of cases, various provisions of the provincial governance had to be abandoned. Provinces located far-off from the capital, such as, the ones in Caspian highlands and inner Asian provinces and in North Africa, were made autonomous. Military governors were appointed in the frontier provinceswho were given a garrison to assist in tax collection. However, in some provinces governors simply collected tributes and the local people collected taxes.Some otherprovinces likeKhurasan and Transoxiana were administered by the local dynasties.Khurasan was under the control of the Tahirids whopaid significant tribute to the Caliph, and Transoxiana was in the effective control of the Samanids who had converted to Islam after integration of Transoxinna into the Islamic Empire.

The Abbasids organized local administration with the basic objective of tax collection. In Iraq and Egyptthe local administrative units were divided into revenue units such as *kura*, *tassuj* and *rustag*. Local officials conducted local surveys to find out the land under cultivation, the expected yield and the crops grown which was then communicated to the central government. The assessed tax of a region was divided into various districts and the unit below it. After deducting local expenditures, the rest was sent to the central government. Lands of the local areas did not comprise crownland,

the confiscated imperial land of the Byzantines and the Sassanids, the church properties and the reclaimed wasteland. Out of the provincial land, few were reserved to be given as land grants to the members of the Abbasid family, important courtiers and officials. These grants were known as*iqta*. There were two types of *iqta* grants-*iqtatamliq* and *iqtaistighlal*. The first type of grant generally consisted of uncultivated but cultivable wasteland with an objective of extending area under cultivation. Such lands were evaluated at concessional rate for first few years and later assessed in normal rates with full proprietary right given to the grantee which was also hereditary. The second type of *iqta* grant was given to those individuals who agreed to pay the central government a fix sum of money in return for the right to tax the peasantry.

Historian Ira M.Lapidus has termed the imperial organization of the Abbasids as a complex bureaucracy highly elaborated at the center and in touch with provincial and localfunctionaries throughout the empire. However, there was no hierarchal relationship between center on the onehand and the province and the locality on the other. At each level, administration was carried on by independent people.Lapidus further points out that in some casesthere were princes orindependent governors who administered the provinces, and, in other cases, they were thelocal village chiefs and landowners without whom the central and provincial governments werehelpless. Lapidus concludes that since the government ties were not strictly hierarchical,complex system of constraints and opportunities, obligations and loyalties, bound the central,provincial and local notables to the Abbasid government.

A clear distinction was made between the holding of the Muslim and non-Muslim peasants for the purpose of revenue collection. The Muslims paid a land tax called as *ushr*which was assessed at one-tenth of the produce and also paid *zakat* (for charitable purposes)which was assessed at 2.5 per cent of the value of their property. The non-Muslims (*zimmis*) or those outside the Muslim *ummah* were supposed to pay *jizya*. The *zimmis* were also required to pay a land tax known as *kharaj* which was assessed at the rate of one-third of the produce.

10.1.4 Islamic Golden Age

The *Abbasid* historical period lasting to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 CE is considered the *Islamic Golden Age*.Harun al-Rashid (786–809 CE) was the fifth Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. He is regarded as one of history's greatest patrons of arts and sciences. Baghdad became the world's most important centre for science, philosophy, medicine, and education under his reign. The Caliphate had contact with a number of distant empires, so scholars at Baghdad could collect, translate, and expand upon the knowledge of other civilizations, such as the Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines. Harun al-Rashid's successors, especially his son Al-Mamun (813–833 CE), continued his policies of supporting scientists,artists and scholars. He commissioned translations of Greek philosophical and scientific treatises. A number of Greek texts were translated to Arabic which gave the Muslim intelligentsia access to the rich store of Greco-Roman knowledge. The works of Plato and Aristotle were translated and became renowned among the Muslim thinkers.Al-Mamun founded the *Bayt al-Hikma*, the House of Wisdom, in Baghdad. It hosted Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who sought to translate and gather the collective knowledge of human history in one place, and in one language—Arabic.



Bayt al-Hikma, House of Wisdom

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Be%C3%AFt_El_Hikma.jpg

Significant ideas from around the world came togetherin the House of Wisdom. The introduction of Indian system of numerals, which have become standard in the Islamic and Western worlds, greatly aided in mathematics and scientific discovery. Scholars like Al-Kindi revolutionized mathematics and synthesized Greek philosophy with Islamic thought. Al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansurmade significant contributions togeometry andastronomy. Al-Khwarizmi, who lived in the early 9th century was one of the most famous mathematicians of the Abbasid period. He was acquainted with the achievements of Indians in mathematics and used the Indian system of numerals in his calculations. The Arabs held Indian mathematics and science in high esteem. Expanding upon Greek mathematical concepts, Al-Khwarizmi developed Algebra. Ibn al-Haythamcontributed significantly to the field of optics, and is generally held to have developed the concept of the scientific method.

History writing during the Abbasid period was deeply influenced by Greco-Roman traditions. In the 9th century, the first serious historical narratives by the Arabs began to appear. Al-Tabari(839-923 CE), who is sometimes called as the '*Livy of the Arabs*', was among the first Islamic historians. His work *Tarikh* is a history of the early Abbasid Caliphate. Al-Masudi and Al-Biruni were other prominent historians.

Many practical innovations occurred, particularly in the field of agriculture. Improved methods of irrigation enabled more land to be brought under cultivation, and new types of mills

and turbines were used to reduce the requirementof labour. Crops and farming techniques were adopted from far-flung neighbouring cultures. Cotton, rice and sugar were taken from India, citrus fruits from China, and sorghum from Africa. These crops ultimatelyreached the West.

10.1.5 Decline of Abbasids

The Abbasid Caliphate thrived through the early 9thcentury, as a result ofthe able Caliphs and their advisers in spite of the major challenges of ruling a massive and multi-ethnic empire. Harun al-Rashid also brought the Abbasid Caliphate to its high point besides being a great patron of the arts and sciences. He had to deal with revolts in Persia and North Africa, and he removed Barmekids from power. His son, Caliph Al-Mamun not only continued his father's patronage by establishing the House of Wisdom, but he made severalsignificant independent innovations.

However,during his reign there was growing division between the Islamic sovereign and the Islamic people which was intensified by the creation of an army of Central Asian soldiers loyal only to him. The provincial governorsbecame increasingly independent. The governor of Persia established his own dynasty and ruled as a king, though he continued to recognize the Abbasid Caliph. This trend of impendent governors caused major complications for the Caliphate.

After the reign of Al-Mamun the Abbasid power began to decline. The cost of running such a huge empire and maintaining a large bureaucracy required steady revenues, and as the authority of the Caliphate weakenedtax collection declined. For the purpose of stabilizingthe state finances, the Caliphs granted tax-farms to governors and military commanders. These governors, with their own troops and revenue bases, soon proved independent-minded and disloyal.

During the reign of Caliph Al-Mutasim (833–842 CE) the gap between the Caliph and his people was furthered. He created his own military force of slave soldiers called *ghilman*(later known as "Mamluks"). These slaves began acting superior to the people of Baghdad, which stirred anger andcaused riots. Rather than trying to diffuse the situation, Al-Mutasim simply moved the capital away from Baghdad and settled in Samarra, 60 miles to the north. Away from the majority of their subjects who resided in Baghdad, the Caliphs wereisolated from the problems of their empire.

Samaria was increasingly being controlled by Caliph's soldiers, turning the Caliph into little more than a puppet. When a Caliph was not pliant, they simply killed him. Al-Muwaffaq, the brother of caliph Al-Mutamid (870–892 CE), attempted to change this. He made the Caliph shift the capital back to Baghdad, and from there Al-Muwaffaq guided the Caliphate to new prosperity and defeated the Zanj Rebellion, an uprising of African slaves that posed a major threat to the Caliphate. Thus, the Abbasid power gained a new lease on life.

However, decline of Abbasids began again under the reign of Al-Muqtadir (908–932 CE), who ascended the throne at the age of thirteen. He proved to be too weak to do anything and acted as a puppet of various factions of the court. Territory after territory declared independence from the Abbasid rule under his Caliphate. Eventually, Abbasid authority extended hardly beyond Baghdad. Al-Muqtadir was finallymurdered by city guards after he impoverished the state to the extent where he could not even pay their salaries.

Al-Muqtadir's son, Al-Radi (934–940 CE) is often considered the last Caliph to exercise any real authority. He attempted to raise a powerful governor of Iraq who would hold power over all the other independent*amirs*(governors). Thus, he created the title *amir al-umara*, "*emir of emirs*," for the governor of Iraq. However, this plan failedbecause the title effectively invested supreme authority in its holder, leaving the Caliph simply as a puppet. The Shiite Buyids soon assumed the title and held it as a hereditary position, becoming the de facto rulers of the central provinces of the Islamic Empire until the mid-eleventh century, although they recognized the religious authority of the Caliph.Thus, the Abbasid Caliphs became little more than religious figureheads. However, the Buyids were ousted by the Sunni Seljuq Turks in the mid-11th century. The Seljuks who conquered Iran, Iraq, Syria, and most of Asia Minor, formed a new and vibrant Islamic Empire. They continued to keep the Abbasid Caliph as the nominal ruler while exercising true authority over the empire as sultans.

The collapse of theSeljuq sultanate collapsed in the 12thcentury, provided an opportunity for Caliph Al-Nasir (1180–1225 CE) to attempt to restore the Abbasid power in Iraq. His long reign of forty-seven years gave him sufficient time to reconquer Mesopotamia and further develop Baghdad as a centre of learning. The Sultanate of Khwarizm, which ruled Persia, was his chief rival. It is alleged that Al-Nasir appealed to the Mongols for help against Khwarizm. Under Al-Nasir's incompetent successors, this planboomerangedcatastrophically. The Mongols completely invaded Khwarizm and then turned their attention to Baghdad.

Perhaps, the Mongols wanted to rule, just like the Buyids and Seljuqs before them, by holding real military power but permitting the symbolic authority of Abbasid Caliph. However, Caliph al-Mutasim (1242–1258 CE) refused to acknowledge the authority of Mongols and offered only insults and threats to these non-Muslims. As a result the Mongols captured the Baghdad in 1258 CE and sacked it. They killed the Caliph, and completely destroyed the city. This formally brought an end to the Abbasid Caliphate as well as the Islamic golden age.

In 1261 CE, the Abbasid line was re-established in Egypt. The sultans of Egypt appointed an Abbasid Caliph in Cairo. However, these Egyptian Caliphs were even more symbolic than the late Caliphs had been in Baghdad, and were simply used to legitimize the power of the sultans. The authority of these Caliphs was simply confined to religious matters. Still, the Abbasid dynasty lasted over 250 years in Egypt. In 1517 CE, Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. Al- Mutawakkil III, the last Abbasid Caliph, was forced to surrender all his authority to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who was the founder of Abbasid Caliphate?
2. What was the name of the capital city of the Abbasid Caliphate?
3. What was the function of *Diwan al-rasail* under Abbasid Caliphate?
4. Name the two types of *iqta* grants under the Abbasids.
5. Define *ushr*.
6. Which period in Islamic history is called as the golden age?

7. Who was the fifth Caliph of Abbasid dynasty?
8. Who founded the *Bayt al-Hikma*, the House of Wisdom, in Baghdad?
9. Write the name of famous mathematician of Abbasid period.
10. Name the Islamic historian known as the 'Livy of the Arabs'.
11. Which Abbasid Caliph created his own military force of slave soldiers called *ghilman*?
12. Who gave the title of *amir al-umara*, "*emir of emirs*," for the governor of Iraq?

10.2 Summary

- The Abbasid dynasty was founded by Abul Abbas al-Saffah. The Abbasid takeover of the Caliphate in 750 CE is termed as 'Abbasid Revolution' because their reign marked a number of changes in the Islamic polity.
- The Abbasid Caliphate oversaw the golden age of Islamic culture. It was one of the longest and most influential Islamic dynasties.
- Under Abbasids the administrative base of the Arab Empire was shifted from Syria to Baghdad that developed into a massive cosmopolitan city.
- The Abbasids gave up the policy of making distinction between Arab and non-Arabs in administrative and military positions, which strengthened their political base.
- One of the most important changes the Abbasids made was to transfer the capital of the Islamic empire from the old Umayyad power base of Damascus to Baghdad. With encouragement from the Abbasid state, Baghdad grew quickly and soon became the largest city in the world.
- By abandoning the policy of conquest, the Abbasids reduced the need of a huge army and created a newprofessional army consisting of Khurasani Arabs and the *mawali* loyal to the Caliph.
- Similar policy was followed in the field of administration, giving it a cosmopolitan outlook. The Caliph became an absolute monarch and the Caliph's court at Baghdad echoed the Byzantine and Sassanid concept of kingship.
- Under the Abbasids the administration became more routinized with the establishment of bureaus (*diwans*) to deal with revenue, chancery and army affairs.
- *Wizarat* was an important administrative institution that developed under the Abbasids. The function of *Wazir* was to supervise and coordinate the operations of the bureaucracy. Later he became the chief of administration.
- The administration of the provinces ranged from direct central control to a lose control exercised by means of military governor.
- Provinces located far away from the capital had to be given autonomy. The local administration was organised with the purpose of tax collection.
- Land grants or *iqtas* were assigned to the members of the royal family and important courtiers and officials who supported the Caliph.

- Land tax was collected after making a distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim holdings.
- While the Muslims paid *ushr* (one-tenth of the produce) the non-Muslims paid *kharaj* (one-third of the produce). However, after large number of conversions, all landholders were required to pay *kharaj*.
- The Abbasid historical period lasting to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 CE is considered the Islamic Golden Age.
- Harun al-Rashid (786–809 CE), who was the fifth Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, is regarded as one of history's greatest patrons of arts and sciences.
- Baghdad became the world's most important centre for science, philosophy, medicine, and education under his reign.
- Harun al-Rashid's successors, especially his son Al-Mamun (813–833 CE), continued his policies of patronising scientists, artists and scholars.
- He commissioned translations of Greek philosophical and scientific treatises. He founded the *Bayt al-Hikma*, the House of Wisdom, in Baghdad.
- The introduction of Indian system of numerals, which have become standard in the Islamic and Western worlds, greatly aided in mathematics and scientific discovery. Al-Khwarizmi was one of the most famous mathematicians of the Abbasid period.
- History writing during the Abbasid period was deeply influenced by Greco-Roman traditions. Al-Tabari, Al-Masudi and Al-Biruni were prominent historians of this period.
- Many practical innovations occurred during this period, particularly in the field of agriculture.
- Slowly, Abbasid power started declining in the face of independent governors, called *amirs*, and a military that controlled the caliphs.
- By the time of Caliph Al-Radi, Abbasid power was mostly confined to Baghdad. He created the title of '*Emir of Emirs*' to check the power of the various independent emirs, but this only diminished the authority of the Caliph.
- The Abbasids became little more than figureheads, until the reign of Caliph al- Nasir who reasserted the authority. However, his successors were not as successful, and the Abbasid Empire was destroyed by the Mongols, who sacked Baghdad.

10.3 Glossary

- **Barid:** The *barid* was the state-run courier service of the Umayyad and later Abbasid Caliphates.
- **Coup d'etat:** The violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group.
- **Iqta:**In the Islamic empire of the Caliphate, land granted to army officials for limited periods in lieu of salary.

- **Mamluk:** Mamlukis a member of one of the armies of slaves established during the Abbasid era that later won political control of many Muslim states.

10.4 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Abul Abbas al-Saffah
2. Baghdad
3. Maintenance of records and correspondence
4. *Iqtatamliq* and *iqtaistighlal*
5. A tax on the agricultural produce of land levied on the Muslims which was assessed at one-tenth of the produce.
6. Abbasid period
7. Harun al-Rashid
8. Al-Mamun
9. Al-Khwarizmi
10. Al-Tabari
11. Al-Mutasim
12. Caliph Al-Radi

10.5 Suggested Readings

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2. Duri, Abd Al-Aziz, *Early Islamic Institutions-Administration and Taxation from the Caliphate to the Umayyads and Abbasids*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2011.
3. Goitein, S.D, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1968.
4. Humphreys, R. Stephen, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, Revised Edition Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
5. Lapidus, Ira M., *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
6. Lambton, Ann S., *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, London: Routledge, 2013.

10.6 Terminal Questions

1. What do you understand by Abbasid Revolution?
2. Analyse the political, administrative and economic policies of the Abbasids.
3. The Abbasid administrative framework was highly complex. How were the Abbasids controlling such a vast central imperial bureaucracy, provincial and local agents and magnates?
4. Why is the Abbasid historical period regarded as the Islamic Golden Age?
5. Discuss the causes of the decline of Abbasid Caliphate.

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CHAPTER-11
ARAB CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION

Structure

11.0 Introduction

Originally the Arabs were the inhabitants of the Arabian Desert. In the 7th century A.D they were converted to Islam.After that they conquered the Middle East from the Sassanian and Byzantine empires and established a series of Arab-Islamic Middle Eastern empires from Spain to Central Asia and from the Caucasus to India.The years between the 7th and 13th centuries signified a period in history when culture and learning flourished in Asia, North Africa, Southern Europe, and the Middle East. Arab world was a great cosmopolitan civilization.Islam became the universally accepted religion and culture of the Persians, Turks, and many other peoples. This new religion provided dynamism. However, it was the Arabic language which provided the unity.

Arab Civilization is anamalgamation of some classical Arab values, Islamic culture and institutions and the inherited knowledge of the great ancient civilizations. The Arabs preserved and built upon the existing knowledge in the fields of government, philosophy, history, art and architecture,

literature, music, physical and mathematical sciences, biology, medicine, engineering, navigation, and commercial law. Although Arab control over Islamic empires proved to beshort-lived, Islam continued to flourish as a religion and civilization of the Middle East. A number of Arab contributions have become an integral part of the human civilization.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess the contribution of Arabs to the field of mathematics, astronomy, architecture, medicine, navigation and geography, horticulture, other sciences, language and calligraphy, historiography, music, philosophy and crafts.

11.1 Mathematics

The Arab '*Sifr'*, or zero provided new solutions for solving complex mathematical problems. The Arab decimal system and the Arab numeral aided the growth of science. Algebra was invented and developed by the Arabs and they made great progress in trigonometry. Al-Khwarizmi, who founded algebra and is known as the "**Father of Algebra**", was inspired by the necessity of finding a more accurate and comprehensive method of ensuring precise divisions of land so as to enable the holy *Quran* to be carefully obeyed in the inheritance laws.The writings of European scholars show the influence of Arabs on mathematical studies in the universities of Europe. Calendar reforms, with a small margin of error was also an Arab contribution.



Al-Khwarizmi

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Al-Khwarizmi.jpg

11.2 Astronomy

Similarto algebra, the astrolabe was improved for religious purposes. It was used to record the accurate time of sunrises and sunsets, and to determine the period for fasting during the month of Ramadan.In the Middle Ages, the Arab astronomers compiled astronomical charts and tables in observatories such as those at Maragha and Palmyra. Gradually, they were able to ascertain the length of a degree, to calculate the longitude and latitude, and to investigate the relative speeds of light and sound. *Zij al-Sindhind* was the first major Muslim work of astronomy was by Persian mathematician Al-Khwarizmi in 830. The work consisted of tables for the movements of the Sun, the Moon and the five planets known at the time. Al-Biruni, who was considered as one of the greatest scientists of all time, discussed the possibility of the earth's rotation on its own axis — a theory was proved by Galileo after 600 years. Arab astronomers such as Al-Fazari, Al-Farghani, and Al-Zarqali contributed to the works of Ptolemy and the classic pioneers in the development of the magnetic compass and the charting of the zodiac. In the 13th century, distinguished astronomers from all over the world gathered to work at Maragha.

11.3 Architecture

One of the mainobjective of early Arab architecture was to promote or glorify Islam. The Arab architects contributed primarily to the building of beautiful mosques and mausoleums. The horseshoe arch was borrowed from the Romans. They developed it into their own unique style, and made it an example for the European architecture. The Great Mosque of Damascus, constructed in the early eighth century, is a beautiful demonstration of the use of the horseshoe arch. The mosque of Ibn Tulun built under the orders of Ahmad Ibn Tulun in the 9th century, is the oldest mosque in Cairo.It provided a stimulus for the building of a number of magnificent cathedrals in Europe. Tudor arch such as those used in the cathedrals of Wells in England and Chartres in France was influenced by Arabian cusp, trefoil, and ogee arches. The Muslim minaret, which was itself inspired by the Greek lighthouse, became the campanile in Europe. San Marcos Square in Venice is one it's most famous examples. Designs of the building of ribbed vaults in Europe were borrowed from the Islamic mosques of Jerusalem, Mecca, Tripoli, Cairo, Damascus and Constantinople. The use of cubal transitional supports under domes by the Arabs was incorporated into the cathedrals and palaces of 11th and 12th century Palermo. Arab styles were daring and elegant. In structures such as the Great Mosque of Cordoba, Lion Court of the Alhambra Palace in Granada, and many of the great medieval religious and civic buildings of Europe Arabesque designs, calligraphy, and explosions of colour were used. The Arab empires reached into Eastern Europe and Asia as well. Startling remnants of a once powerful conquest are evident in Russia. The Bibi Khanum Mosque, which catches everyone's eye, is one of the most important monuments of Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

11.4 Medicine

Medicine was an important part of the medieval Islamic culture. The Arabs made improvements in the medicine of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. Al-Razi was a celebrated alchemist and Muslim philosopher and also regarded as the greatest physician of the Islamic world.

His two most significant works were the *Kitab al-Mansuri* and *Kitab al-hawi*. He was the first to diagnose measles and smallpox. He associated these diseases and others with human contamination and contagion and introduced remedies such as mercurial ointment and to use animal gut for sutures. Ibn Sina was another preeminent philosopher and physician of the Islamic world. He was known in Europe as Avicenna. He was the greatest writer of medicine in the Middle Ages. His renowned book, the *Canon* surveyed the entire medical knowledge available from the ancient and Muslim sources. Avicenna studied the contagious nature of tuberculosis and transmission of diseases by water and soil. Heconducted pioneer work in mental health, and was a forerunner of today's psychotherapists. He believed that some illnesses were psychosomatic.In order to explain the present ailment he sometimes led patients back to a recollection of an incident buried in the subconscious. He is rightly called as the, "**Prince of Physicians**" of his era.



Ibn Sina or Avicenna

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Avicenne_-_Avicenna_-_Ibn_Sina_(980-1037)_CIPB2067.jpg

Ibn Khatib was another physician of the emirate of Granada. In his treatise about the plague that ravaged the world in the 14thCentury, heexplores the idea of the spread of disease through contagion. Another Arab, in his book, *Kitabu'l Maliki*, presented a basic conception of the capillary system. Ibn al-Nafis, an Arab from Syria, discovered the fundamental principles of pulmonary

circulation. He postulated that the pores of the heart are closed, there is no passage between the two heart chambers and the substance of heart is thick. He further suggested that the blood rose into the lungs by means of the arterial vein and then circulated into the left cavity of the heart.

Basil, oregano, thyme, fennel, anise, liquorice, coriander, rosemary, nutmeg, and cinnamon found their way through Arab pharmacies to European tables.Islamic physicians of the Middle ages used camphor, cloves, poppy, hemp, myrrh, syrups, juleps, and rosewater as a type of remedy or medicine.

11.5 Navigation and Geography

The medieval Arabs made improvements in the ancient navigational practices with the development of the magnetic needle in the 9thcentury. Al-Idrisi, a 12th century scientist living in Sicily, wasone of the most brilliant geographers of the medieval world. He was commissioned by the Norman King, Roger II of Sicily to compile a world atlas, which contained more than70 maps. His maps contains the Mediterranean Sea, Northern Africa, Europe, and parts of Asia. He wrote *Kitab nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq* ("The Pleasure Excursion of One Who Is Eager to Traverse the Regions of the World")which was considered as the greatest work of medieval geography.

Ibn Battuta was a 14th century Moroccan explorer who was probably the hardiest traveller of his time. He travelled extensively. He was not a professional geographer, but he covered over seventy five thousand miles in his travels by horse, camel and sailboat. Hetravelled to Turkey, Bulgaria, Russia, Persia, and Central Asia. He also visited India during the reign of DelhiSultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, and from there was appointed ambassador to the emperor of China. After touring China, he travelled to all of North Africa and a number of places in Western Africa. Ibn Battuta's book, *Rehla* (Safarnama or journey), contain information on the political, social and economic conditions of the places he visited.

Anotherhighly educated Moroccan named Hassan al-Wazzan, who was captured, enslaved and presented as a gift to Pope Leo X, has received much attention in the West. He became a protege of Pope Leo X. Leo freed him and christened him Johannes Leo, although he came to be known as Leo Africanus. He wrote the book named "*Description of Africa (1526)*"which was translated into many European languages. For nearly two centuries, Leo Africanus was read as the most authoritative source on Africa.

Ibn Majid was one of the greatest and the most renowned Arab navigators and cartographers of all times. He was famous for his seafaring skills throughout the Indian Ocean which earned him the nickname "**Lion of the Sea**". According to some historians it was Ibn Majid who helped Vasco Da Gama reach India as the Portuguese sailors at that time were not as skilled as the people who lived around the Indian Ocean.

11.6 Horticulture

The ancient Arabs were the pioneers in botany. In the 12thcentury Ibn al-Awam produced an outstanding reference work named*Al-Filahat* which described more than five hundred different plants and methods of grafting, soil conditioning, and curing of diseased vines and trees. The contributions of Arabs to food production are legion.Theywere able to graft a single vine so that it

would bear grapes in different colours, and their vineyards were responsible for the future of wine industries of Europe. Arab soldiers transplanted peach, apricot, and loquat trees in southern Europe. The cultivation of hardy olive was encouraged in the sandy soil of Greece, Spain, and Sicily. They introduced the cultivation of sugar from India, andthey brought cotton to European markets from Egypt.**For Arabs, coffee isn't just a delicious drink that boost their energy level and help them get the work done. Rather, drinking coffee or *qahwah* in the Arab world is a social activity so close to heart and is deeply rooted in the Arab traditions and culture.** They also mastered the art of the storage of soft fruits to be eaten fresh throughout the year.

Arab horticulture contributed to development of fragrant flowers and herbs used for extracting perfumes. They developed gardens for the pleasure of the senses. Bulb flowers were already in a greatly hybridized and cultivated state when the Crusaders carried them home from Palestine to Western Europe towards the end of Arab power. The Crusaders and the trade caravans of Eastern merchants introduced rice, sesame, pepper, ginger, cloves, melons and shallots, as well as dates, figs, oranges, lemons, and other citrus fruits into European cuisine. The European women borrowed lipsticks, nail polishes, eye shadow, eye liner, perfumes and powders, hair dyes, body lotions and oils, and even wigs from the cosmetics first prepared by the Egyptians, Syrians, and Phoenicians. A symbol of the vanity of the women of medieval timesin European courts was the high peaked, pointed cap with its trailing veil of silk. In Jerusalem this fashion was called as the **ton tour**. Much of jewellery used today is a result of inspiration from ornamentations of the ancient and medieval Arabs.

11.7 Other Sciences

Arab's contributions to the science of engineering comprise water wheel, irrigation, cisterns, water wells at fixed levels, and the water clock. The three sons of Musa Ibn Shakir published the Book on Artifices in 860 CE, which described a hundred technical constructions. Outstanding philosopher, Al-Kindi, wrote on specific weight, tides, light reflection and optics. In the 10th century, Al-Haytham (known in Europe as Alhacen or Alhazen) wrote a book on optics named*Kitab Al Manazir*. He is regarded as the "**Father of Optics**".He correctly explained and proved the modern intromission theory of visual perception, and conducted experiments on lenses, mirrors, refraction, reflection, and the dispersion of light into its constituent colours. He explored optical illusions, the rainbow, and the camera obscura (which led to the beginning of photographic instruments). He also made discoveries in atmospheric refractions, studied the eclipse, and laid the foundation for the development of the microscope and the telescope. Due to his quantitative, empirical and experimental approach to physics and science, he is regarded as the pioneer of the modern scientific methodand of experimental physics, and some have described him as the "first scientist".

11.8 Language and Calligraphy

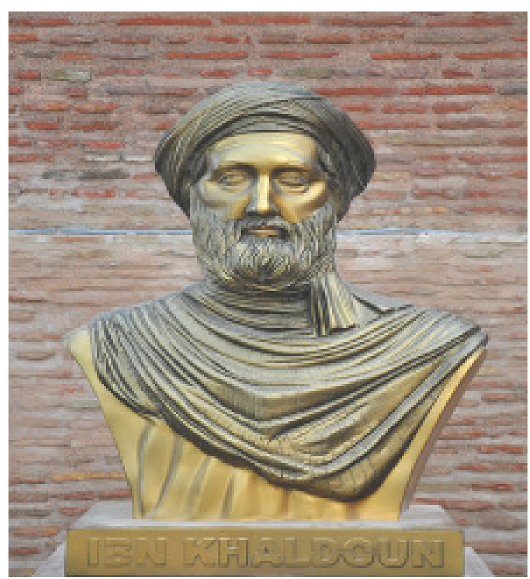
The Muslims venerated the Arabic language because God spoke to Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. The Arabic poetry, literature and drama have left their mark on both East and West. The translations of the Greek and Roman works of Aristotle, Plato, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, Dioscorides and Galen were among the earliest publications of the Arabs. Some scholars even claim that

translations of the 12thcentury Arabic legend, *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi, may have been an inspiration for the later work, Romeo and Juliet. *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (Alive, Son of Awake) written by Ibn Tufail is considered by many to be the first real novel. It was translated into Latin by Pocock in 1671 and into English by Simon Ockley in 1708. It is very much similar to Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. *A Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of largely Middle Eastern and Indian stories and Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* are among the best loved and most widely read of Arab literature. The fascination with Arabicis particularly apparent in characterizations of the Moors (*Othello* and the Prince of Morocco) by William Shakespeare, in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, and in the *Battle of Alcazar* by George Peele.

Arabic calligraphy is the artistic practice of handwriting and calligraphy based on the Arabic alphabet. It is called as *khatt* which is derived from the world 'line', 'design', or 'construction'. Arabic calligraphy itself became an art form for the Muslims. It was the principal form of embellishment on all the Arabian mosques, and the religious and public buildings of Palermo, Cordoba, Lisbon and Malaga are resplendent with it. *Naskh*, *Nastaliq*, *Diwani*, *Thuluth* and *Reqa* were the principal Arabic cursive styles. The oldest form of Arabic script is Kufic. The Arabic alphabet is used throughout the world.*Qalam* is the traditional instrument of the Arabic calligrapher. It is a pen made of dried reed or bamboo. Before the advent of paper, papyrus and parchment were used for writing.

11.9 Historiography

In Arabic civilization the origin of historiography is to be sought in *Quran* and *Hadis*. However, the beginning of scientific historiography in the Arab world may be traced to 8th century CE and is associated with the life and activities of Prophet Muhammad. The Arabs developed a system of historiography known as **isnad**. This procedure documents all reliable sources and it facilitates the modern historian with accurate and comprehensive materials. Ibn Khaldun was the foremost among these historiographers of whose Book of Examples Arnold Toynbee writes: "Ibn Khaldun, has conceived and formulated a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time."



Ibn Khaldun

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ibn_Khaldun#/media/File:Bust_of_Ibn_Khaldun_(Casbah_of_Bejaia,_Algeria).jpg

11.10 Music

The majority of musical instruments used in the medieval Europe and classical music have their origin in the Arabic musical instruments that were adopted from the medieval Arab world. The musical instruments used today such as lyre, zither, harp, drum, tambourine, flute, oboe and reed are either exactly similar as they were used from earliest Arab civilization or variations of the Arabs' early musical instruments. The mandolin and guitar are sisters to that plaintive, pear-shaped stringed instrument, the oud.The Arabic *rabab*, also called as the spiked fiddle, is the earliest known bowed string instrument and the ancestor of all European bowed instruments, including the rebec, the Byzantine lyra, and the violin.The Crusaders returning from the wars in Palestine were the first to introduce bagpipe in Europe. It quickly became identified with the British Isles. The bagpipe returned to Palestine with the British Army. This lost musical art was learned again during the period of Sir John Glubb's reorganization and command of Jordan's colourful Bedouin Corps. Arabic poetry was put to music by the refined delicacy of minor key sequences and rhythm.

11.11 Philosophy

Arabian philosophy or *falsafah*generally refers to the philosophical thought of those inhabitants of the Islamic world who were influenced by Greek learning but used the Arabic language as their medium of expression. These were the doctrines of the philosophers of the 9th to 12th century. Theysuccessfully integrated faith and scientific fact, letting one exit within the framework of the other. The Arab philosophers re-discovered the classic philosophy of Aristotle, Plotinus, and Plato attempted to find answers to the fundamental questions concerning God's creation of the universe, the nature and destiny of the human soul, and the true existence of the seen as the unseen. Among the renowned philosophers of the medieval world were Al-Kindi, whose philosophy was synonymous to enquiry into nature and contributed to the work of Plato and Aristotle; Al-Farabi, who made a model of Man's community; Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who postulated theories on form and matter that were incorporated into medieval Christian Scholasticism; Ibn Khaldun, who explained the cycles of a state in his Muqqadimah (Introduction).

11.12 Crafts

The ancient Arabs believed that the arts served God, so they raised small scale artistries to new levels of perfection. Glassware, ceramics, and textile demonstrate their imagination and special skills. They covered objects and walls with complicatedly detailed mosaics, tiles, carvings, and paintings. Syrian beakers and rock crystals were in great demand in Europe and the Azulejos. The iridescent lustre pottery from the Moorish kilns in Valencia was also very popular. New glazing techniques were developed, and the brilliant blues took on many names.

The Arabianshad mastered the art of silk weaving, and the Arab cape worn by Robert II, the King of Sicily on his coronation is one of the best examples of this delicate art. Cotton muslin, Damask linen and Shiraz wool became catchphrases for quality in European textiles. During the Middle Ages,the Moroccan tanners developed methods for tanning hides as soft as silk, and used vegetable dyes that retained colour indefinitely. These leathers were utilized for binding books, and the gold tooling and coloured panels of the Arab style are still being produced, particularly in Venice and Florence to the present day.

The Arabs also developed the art of crucible steel forging. They hardened the steel, polished and decorated it with etchings, and made tempered Damascene swords. Other works in metal comprised intricately cut brass chandeliers, salvers, jewel cases decorated with gold and silver, andthe beautifully decorated astrolabe.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who is known as the Father of Algebra?
2. Name the first major Muslim work of astronomy.
3. Write the name of one of the most important monuments of Samarkand.
4. Name the two most significant works of alchemist and philosopher Al-Razi.
5. Who was the author of book *Canon* which surveyed the entire medical knowledge available from ancient and Muslim sources?
6. Name the famous geographer of the medieval world who was commissioned by the Norman King, Roger II of Sicily to compile a world atlas.
7. Who wrote Rehla (Safarnama)?
8. Name the highly educated Moroccan who was captured, enslaved and presented as a gift to Pope Leo X who freed him and christened him Johannes Leo.
9. Who was Ibn Majid?
10. Who wrote Al-Filahat?
11. Name the Arabian scientist who is regarded as the Father of Optics.
12. Write the name of two best loved and most widely read of Arab literature.
13. What is Arab calligraphy known as?
14. Name the system of historiography developed by the Arabs.
15. What is rabrab?
16. Write the name of any two Arab philosophers of the Middle Ages.

11.13 Summary

- The contributions of the Arabs to civilization cannot be overlooked.
- The Arabs made significant contribution in the field of mathematics. Algebra and trigonometry made great progress.
- Arab astronomers compiled astronomical charts and tables. Al-Fazari, Al-Farghani and Al-Zarqali were some of the great astronomers.
- Arab architects constructed beautiful mosques and mausoleums.
- The Arabs made improvements in the earlier system of medicine. Al Razi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Khatib were some of the well-known Arab physicians.
- The Arabs made improvements in the ancient navigational practices. Al-Idrisi, Ibn Battuta, Hassan al-Wazzan and Ibn Majid were some of the great navigators and explorers.

- The Arabs greatly contributed to the development of horticulture. Ibn al-Awam wrote a treatise named *Al-Filahat* on agriculture. Arab horticulture contributed to development of fragrant flowers and herbs used for extracting perfumes.
- Arab's contributions to the science of engineering comprise water wheel, irrigation, cisterns, water wells at fixed levels, and the water clock.
- The Arabic poetry, literature and drama have left their mark on both East and West. The Arabic calligraphy had a great impact in the improvement of arts all over the world. It became an art form for the Muslims.
- The Arabs developed a system of historiography known as isnad. This procedure documents all reliable sources and it facilitates the modern historian with accurate and comprehensive materials. Ibn Khaldun was the foremost among these historiographers.
- The Arabs greatly contributed to the development of music. A majority of musical instruments used in the medieval Europe and classical music have their origin in the Arabic musical instruments that were adopted from the medieval Arab world.
- The impact of Arabic philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Averroes on Western philosophy was particularly strong in natural philosophy, psychology and metaphysics, but also extended to logic and ethics.
- The Arabs greatly contributed to the development of crafts such as glassware, ceramics, textiles etc.
- In short, it may be said that at a time when the West was lagging far behind, Arab Civilisation was at its peak intellectually and artistically.
- However, while discussing the contributions of Arabs in different fields, it should be kept in mind that their thought was moulded and shaped by the ancient cultures of Greece, Rome, China, India, and Byzantine etc.

11.14 Glossary

- **Alchemist:** A person who transforms or creates something through a seemingly magical process.
- **Astrolabe:**An instrument used for making astronomical measurements, typically of the altitudes of celestial bodies, and in navigation for calculating latitude.
- **Cartographer:** A person who draws or produces maps.
- **Crusader:** A person who campaigns vigorously for political, social, or religious change; a campaigner.
- **Horticulture:**The art or practice of garden cultivation and management.

11.15 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Al-Khwarizmi
2. Zij al-Sindhind
3. The Bibi Khanum Mosque

4. *Kitab al-Mansuri* and *Kitab al-hawi*
5. Ibn Sina or Avicenna
6. Al-Idrisi
7. Ibn Battuta
8. Hassan al-Wazzan
9. He was the famous Arab navigator and cartographer who helped Vasco Da Gama reach India. He was nicknamed as 'Lion of the Sea'.
10. Ibn al-Awam
11. Al-Haytham (Alhacen or Alhazen)
12. A Thousand and One Nights and Rubaiyat
13. Khatt
14. Isnad
15. Also known as the spiked fiddle, rabrab is the earliest known bowed string instrument and the ancestor of all European bowed instruments.
16. Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi

11.16 Suggested Readings

1. Arnold, Sir Thomas and Alfred Guillaume (ed.), *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford University Press.
2. Hayes, John (edited), *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, New York University Press, 1975.
3. Hitti, K.Philips,*History of the Arabs*, St.Martin Press, Tenth Edition, 1970.
4. Hoyland, Robert G, *Arabia and the Arabs*. Routledge, 2002.
5. Lewis, Bernard, *The Arabs in History*, London: Oxford University Press, 6th revised ed, 2002.

11.17 Terminal Questions

1. 'Arab Civilization in the Medieval Period left behind a legacy of discoveries and achievements'. Justify this statement.
2. Discuss the contribution of Arabs in the field of sciences.
3. What was the contribution of Arabs in the field of navigation and geography?
4. How did Arabs contributed to the development of music, language and calligraphy and philosophy?
5. Write short notes on the following:-
   (i) Historiography under Arabs in medieval period
   (ii) Development of Arabian Crafts during the Middle Ages

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UNIT-III

CHAPTER-12
FEUDALISM IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE-I

Structure:

12.0 Introduction

In Western Europe, by the beginning of the 10th century, a social formation which was basically different from the social formation of Greco-Roman antiquity had emerged. The slave social formation was replaced by the feudal social formation which consisted of Roman as well as Germanic traditions. The word 'feudalism' was popularised through the works of the 18th century French philosophers, especially by Boulainvilliers and Montesquieu, who used it to designate the sharing of sovereignty among a host of pretty princes and lords during the Middle Ages. However, with the progress of the French Revolution, the term was practically used as a general description covering many abuses of the *Ancien Regime.* Since then, different meanings have been attached to the word 'feudalism', with the general agreement that between the 10th and the 12th century, feudalism, either as a political structure or as a social formation, was the dominant system in western and central Europe. It was a kind of social system based on the rights and obligations relating to land ownership. It shaped the medieval European societies for hundreds of years.The debates on feudalism include a wide spectrum of themes such as the origins, nature and consequences.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Analyse the views of various scholars on feudalism in Europe,
- Understand the early formulations of feudalism in Europe,
- Examine the views which represent feudalism as ties of dependence,
- Describe the concept of feudalism as a mode of production.

12.1 Early Formulations

The early historians of feudalism such as F.W Maitland, Karl Bucher and others often highlighted the legalistic aspects of this system, namely fiefs, vassalage, knightly or military service and justice by the lords. They traced the roots of these features and emphasized upon the continuity of elements from the Germanic kingdoms and the Roman Empire.In the late 19th century the British legal historian F. W Maitland carried out a ground-breaking work with his understanding of feudalism. According to him, the basic features of feudalism in medieval Europe were disintegration of political authority, public power in private hands, and a military system in which avital part of the armed forces was secured by means of private contracts. To put it simply, feudalism was perceived as a method of government, and a way of securing the forces essential to preserve that method of government. A number ofcontemporary historians think it necessary to confine the use of word 'feudalism' only to the particularly voluntary and personal bonds of mutual protection, loyalty and support among the members of the administrative, military or ecclesiastical elite in medieval Europe, to the exclusion of the involuntary obligations associated with the unfree tenures. According to this formulation, the bonds which the term 'feudalism' excludes, may be considered under a separate category of Manorial system.



F.W Maitland

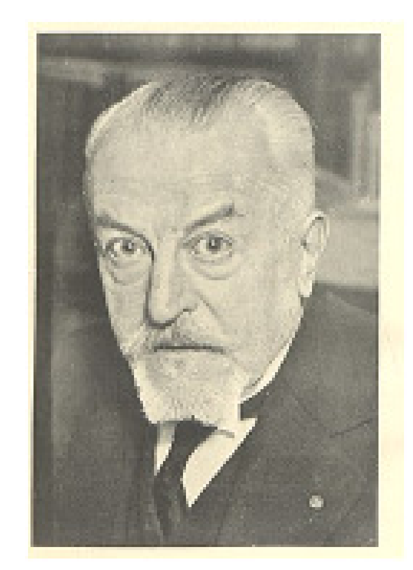
Source:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Maitland.FW.jpg

Nearly all these features of the medieval European political organisation, however, seemed to have formed a sharp break from the traditions of antiquity. The origin of feudalism, as a form of the disintegration of the political authority, was therefore located in the traditions of the 'barbarian' Germanic tribes who caused the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the 5thcentury. The term 'feudalism'generally meant political and economic decline in the early legalistic and dynastic histories. As Max Weber argued,conditions of a 'natural economy', or 'closed house economy' according to Karl Bucher, enveloped the Europe during the age of feudalism. Nevertheless, a majority of the professional historians abandoned such catastrophic views of the 'barbarian invasions' by the end of the 19thcentury and began to appreciate the intricacies of the transition from the ancient world to medieval civilisation.

A theory of Roman origins of feudalism was propagated by historianFustel de Coulanges, which emphasized the Roman precedence of the mansi and the villa, and had a significant influence on historical interpretations in his times. In early 20th century, French historian Henri See, Belgian historian Otto Seeck and the Austrian historian Alfons Dopsch emphasised on the elements of continuity between the Germanic kingdoms and the Roman Empire. Tracing the roots of the different forms of landholding, social classes and political structure to the organisation of the later Roman Empire, Dopsch maintained that in medieval Europe, except for the temporary disturbances caused by the invasions, trades still prospered along the Roman roads, carrying both the luxuries and objects of daily life. For Dopsch, the towns continued to exist and countless local markets discredits the theory of regression to natural economy. He does not find any cultural break between the late antiquity and the middle ages: "The Germans were not enemies to destroy or wipe out Roman culture, on the contrary they preserved and developed it". Even the French historian Ferdinand Lot, who held that the end of antiquity had a devastating consequence for the European civilisation, believed that the pace of transition have been sluggish and observed that the continued contact and gradual synthesis of the Roman and Germanic worlds permitted many Roman institutions to percolate the structure of the barbarian kingdoms.

12.2 Ties of Dependence

Belgian historian Henry Pirenne offered a powerful and provocative explanation of the origin of feudalism in medieval Europe. According to Pirenne, trade occupied crucial position and hebelieved that the disruption of trade in Europe greatly contributed to the development of feudalism. However, his theory did not concern itself to a great extent with the definition of feudalism. In the early 20th century two opposing, though related, theories of feudalism came to the fore. The first conception, mainstream liberal view regarded feudalism as a body of institutions based on the practice of obedience and subordination i.e. it created and controlled the exchange of obligations of obedience and service on the one hand and those of protection and maintenance on the other. Here one free man (vassal) used to surrender himself to another free but more powerful man (lord). Since the lord generally granted a unit of real property known as fief to his vassal, historians such as F. L. Ganshof and F. M. Stenton argued, that the term feudalism comprised no more than the institutions which involved these practices. They believed that it was in this technical sensethatthe term could be properly applied to describe the states originating out of thedisintegration of the Carolingian empire and the countries they influenced.



Henry Pirenne

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henri_Pirenne(47212412).jpg

The second theory propounded by the Marxist and especially the Soviet historians undertook an examination of the economic structure of the feudal society. Karl Marx, in the 19th century, had already proposed an understanding of human history based on different modes of production which have determined the general character of the social, political and ideological processes. In accordance with this formulation, they characterised the system of mutual but unequal personal relations among members of the military elite as a mere derivative of the larger social relations of production which had to work within a mode of production marked by the absence of commodity exchange.

The French historian Marc Bloch, largely deviating from both the restrictive legalistic view and the economic deterministic theory of 'feudalism', explained the phenomenon by exploring the various forms of 'the ties between man and man'. He christened these ties as ties of 'interdependence'. Bloch regarded feudalism as a set of social conditions where the relations of personal protection and subordination expandedenormously as the dispersal of political authority operated through an extreme sub-division of the rights of real property. He argued that the bond of kinship increasingly tightened with the development of feudalism. The group founded on blood relationship worked both as a springboard of help and protection for the individual, since the power of the state to provide such protection declined. There was economic unity too asa number of related households often formed associations which apart from sharing the common room and board and cultivating the common fields, were also held collectively responsible for the payment of dues and commutation of services to the feudal lord.



Marc Bloch

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Marc_Bloch#/media/File:Marc_Bloch.jpg

Bloch argued that despitemany social and regional variationsthe principle of a 'human nexus' where one individual considered himself as a subordinate to another was prevalent in the feudal society. Vassalage was the form of such dependencewhich was peculiar to the members of the militarised upper classes. Both the political exigencies and the contemporarymentality attached great value to the exchange of protection and obedience. Since there was no system ofsalary in agrarian economy with limited money exchange, fiefs or

stipendiary tenements for the vassals were in widespread use. The lower orders of the society were tied together by a whole group of relationships of personal dependence – vassalage – which had as their common features of a rigorous domination on the subordinate's part, and on that of the protector a nearly uninhibited authority, productive of profitable revenues. Bloch denied manor as a feudal organisation in itself, though he accepted that it had definitelyaided in extending the grip of feudalism over a much larger population. He located the deviations both within and between feudal societiesinside this broad framework of the pervasive ties of dependence, particularly in the forms or complexity of noble association, the extent of peasant dependency and the importance of money expenditures. Thus, the term 'feudalism' apparently was anexperimental device for comparative studies of local phenomena, rather than as a blanket definition of the medieval social order.

Bloch also highlighted the transformations that took place over time within this overall structure. He argued that the European society experienced a series of profound and extensive changes during the middle of the 11thcentury. He propagatedthe theory of two feudal ages. While the second feudal age did not make a complete break with the first, in nearly all spheres of life some qualitatively different advances were made. In this age the evolution of the economy– mainlycomprising demographic growth, consolidation of human settlements, development of intercommunication, increase in trade, urban growth, and improvement of the currency situation– involvedhonest revision of social values. Paralleling the decline or transformation of the 'classical feudalism', a rather contraction in the size of the associated groups in addition to loosening of the kinship bonds were continuing.

The emergence of the individual was already being signalled in the new sectors of growth and development. The development of Latin Christianity, the process of linguistic assimilation, the revival of interest in Roman law and ultimately the repeated empowermentsaided this process. Bloch's theory constituted a definite breakthrough in the analysis of the medieval societies and made immense contribution through his rich and in depth analysis of the topic. However, the researches it stimulated,have proposed major modifications of his thesis. Historians have mentioned that while Bloch's explanation is well aware of the constant though slow changes in the feudal society, there is no identification of impetus of change or its decline. He describes, but often does not account for, the inner dynamism of the social process. Bloch has also been criticised on the grounds of a loose chronology, rigid conception of state and a dated conception of lineage.

12.3 Mode of Production

Marxist historians consistently emphasize the importance of the forces and relations of economic production since the other features of the feudal society were considered as reflections and expressions of this complex. Although feudalism had continued to be analysed as a mode of production dominated by land and a natural economy, the theory was fully developed and worked out by the British historian Perry Anderson in 1978 CE. In his work entitled '*Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*' he asserts that the feudal social formation was borne out of the catastrophic collision of two modes of production i.e. the primitive Germanic

tribal system and the ancient Roman Slave mode of production. Thus, for Anderson feudalism was the specific creation of the fusion of Germanic and Roman legacies. Different use of Marxian perspective has produced a variety of historical perspectives.Guy Bois's intensive study of the village of Lournand in France not only confirmed Georges Duby's findings on the small scale but also extended Duby's thesis into an interesting argument concerning the dialectical role of economy and productive relations during the period between the Germanic invasions and the first millennium, in the context of late feudal England. The Marxist historians like Dobb, Brenner and Hilton have argued in contradictory ways.

Anderson's studychallenged the conventional portrayal of feudalism as an economy of regression or an era of decline and disintegration. He argued that feudalism was a more advanced system of increasing agricultural productivity and surplus than the classical slave mode of productionand that there were a number of structural contradictions within feudalism whose overall consequences were to drive the whole agrarian economy forward. Feudal lords extracted the surplus from the peasants in different forms of labour services, rents in kind or customary dues. This form was articulatedby means of politico-legal relations of compulsion of which serfdom was the most common form. As a consequence there was a lawful amalgamation of economic exploitation with political authority which is termed asextra-economic coercion in Marxist terminology. The peasant was subjected to the jurisdiction of his lord. Simultaneously, the property rights of the lord over his land were not absolute. His right in land was mediated at both ends through a lord who was his superior to whom he owed military and other obligations, and a vassal who was subordinate to him, who in turn owed him services and various kinds of dues. The chain of such dependent tenures associated with military service extended up to the monarch who held all lands as his domain. As a result, political sovereignty was never concentrated on a single centre. Anderson argued that while the functions of the State were thus disintegrated in a vertical allocation downwards, the political and the economic relations were integratedat each level. In his opinion, the division of sovereignty was constitutive of the entire feudal mode of production.



Perry Anderson

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Perry_Anderson#/media/File:Perry_Anderson_at_Fronteiras_do_Pensamento_Porto_Alegre.jpg

Anderson saw the phenomenon as a 'synthesis' of elements released by the parallel dissolution of primitive-communal and slave modes of production. He insisted that nowhere in Europe the mode of production existed in a pure state in real historical sense.Social formations of medieval Europe were always composite systems, in which other modes of production survived and intertwined with feudalism proper. Following the Soviet historians Liublinskaya, Gutnove and Udaltsova, Anderson propagated a three-fold zonewise typology of feudalism.

(i) The first zone consisted of northern France and its neighbouring regions. In this zone, Anderson saw a 'balanced synthesis' of the Roman and the Germanic elements.

(ii) The second zone that lay to the south of the core region comprised Provence, Italy and Spain. Here, the Roman legacy was much more dominant in the recombination of barbarian and ancient modes of production. Hence, from the very beginning, the Roman legal conceptions of property as free, heritable and alienable, qualified feudal landed standards. The rural society was heterogeneous, combining manors, free-hold peasants, latifundia and urban landowners in different regions.

(iii) In the third zone, lying to the north and east of the core region and including Germany, Scandinavia and England, the influence of the Roman rule was either superficial or non-existent. As a result, an allodial peasantry in these places strongly persistedon its communal institutions which considerablyreduced the pace of the transition towards feudalism. Consequently, serfdom was not introduced into Saxony until the late 12thcentury and it was never properly established in Sweden at all. According to Anderson, it was only due to the continuation of these older local traditionsthat a full-fledged feudalism arrived in Germany in the 12thcentury, while the Norman conquerors had to systematically implant an imported model of centralised feudalism in Englandfrom above.

Anderson, while stressing the dynamic character of the feudal economy, argued that the lords and the peasants were in disagreement whichultimatelyresulted in stimulating productivity at both ends. On the one hand, the lord attempted toexploit labour services on his manor and maximise dues in kind from the peasant strips, and net productivity on the noble demesnes remained considerably higher than on the peasant plots. In contrast,as the surplus itself grew, the direct role of the lord in managing and supervising the process of production declined. Ultimately,due to resistance of peasants, improvements in equipment and the customary nature of the feudal dues, a margin was created for the results of improved productivity to amass to the direct producer. In the same way, in opposition to the argument of urban decline in medieval Europe, Anderson maintained that although the largest medieval towns never matched in scale those of the ancient world, their function within the social formation was progressive. Consequently, anactive opposition between an urban economy of increasing commodity exchange and a rural economy of natural exchange was possible only in the feudal mode of production. The conflict between feudalism's own rigorous tendency to a decayof sovereignty and the class unity of the nobility also proved to be productive to the extent it provided, Anderson contended, the objective condition for the political autonomy of the towns in the later middle ages.

In Anderson's view, however, the progress of medieval agriculture, startedexperiencing its own consequences from the middle of the 13thcentury when the forces of production tended to stall and recede within the existent relations of production. He considerably altered the older Marxian thesis which tried to explain the demise of the feudal system from the perspective of developments which were insignificant to the medieval dynamic. According to Anderson, a technical barrier was attained at which exploitation became impracticable or even detrimental both in agriculture and mining. The 'fundamental machinery of rural improvement', which had worked the entire feudal economy forward for three centuries, ultimately overreached this objective limit of the forces of production. As there was increase in population while yields fell, the seigneurial income graduallydiminished. For the purpose of compensating the decline in the income, the lords involved themselvesincreasingly in warfare and plunder.This in turn, helped by the waves of pestilence, led to a devastating scarcity of labour. The lords responded to the crisis by attempting to reinforce stricter servile conditions that led to a desperate class struggle. One of the basic contradictions of the regime–the dual formulation of the feudal mode of production in the urban and the rural sectors—now reached a point where the former, structurally protected by the parcellisation of sovereignty in the medieval polity, could conclusively influence the result of the class struggle in the latter. The towns, which progressively came to observe the runaway serfs as a positive labour input for urban manufacture, had already contributed to the slow but steady process of commutation of dues into money rents. Now they actively aided the process of disbanding serfdom. Thus the particular mode of production collapsed because it had begun to hamper the expansion of society's productive capacity. Far from the general crisis in the feudal mode of production worsening the conditions of peasants, it ended by improving and emancipating it.

Anderson's thesis has been criticized for being too schematic. While he emphasizes the 'catastrophic collision' or class struggle as the impetus which brings about both feudal society and its demise, his concentration on this single characteristicoverlooks the larger and more varied picture of the feudal societies.

Self-Check Exercise

1. What according to F.W Maitland, were the basic features of feudalism in medieval Europe?
2. Who proposed the theory of Roman origins of feudalism?
3. Name the historians who emphasized on the elements of continuity between the Germanic kingdoms and the Roman Empire.
4. What were Henry Pirenne views regarding the origins of feudalism?
5. Name the French historian who explained feudalism by exploring the various forms of 'ties between man and man'.
6. Who wrote the work entitled '*Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*'?
7. What was Perry Anderson's view regarding the origins of feudalism?
8. What was feudal mode of production?

9. What do you understand by extra-economic coercion?
10. In to how many zones did Anderson divided the typology of feudalism?

12.4 Summary

- The debates on feudalism include a wide spectrum of themes such as the origins, nature and consequences.
- The early historians of feudalism such as F.W Maitland, Karl Bucher and others often highlighted the legalistic aspects of this system, namely fiefs, vassalage, knightly or military service and justice by the lords.
- They traced the roots of these features and emphasized upon the continuity of elements from the Germanic kingdoms and the Roman Empire.
- Henry Pirenne believed that the disruption of trade in Europe greatly contributed to the development of feudalism.
- Marc Bloch observed the feudalism from the point of view of ties of dependence and argued that the bond of kinship progressively tightened with the development of feudalism.
- Perry Anderson regarded feudalism as a more advanced system of generating agricultural productivity and agrarian surplus than the traditional slave mode of production. He opined that feudalism took the whole agrarian economy forward.

12.5 Glossary

- **Latifundium:**A very big agricultural estate in the Roman world, generally worked on by slave labour.
- **Lombards (Lombardy):** One of the Germanic people who were conquerors of Italy.
- **Manse:** A unit of land cultivated by one peasant family's labour, whether it belonged to the lord or the peasant himself. This was the unit of measurement of labour dues.
- **Mode of Production:** A term generally used by the Marxist scholars to refer to the method of producing the necessities of life prevalent at a particular stage which determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life.
- **Seignior/Lord:** Feudal lord, person of high rank in feudal system.
- **Tenures:** Form of right or title under which landed property is held.

12.6 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. According to F.W Maitland, the basic features of feudalism in medieval Europe were disintegration of political authority, public power in private hands, and a military system in which a vital part of the armed forces was secured by means of private contracts.
2. Fustel de Coulanges
3. Henri See, Otto Seeck and Alfons Dopsch.
4. In Henry Pirenne's view, trade occupied crucial position and he believed that the disruption of trade in Europe greatly contributed to the development of feudalism.

5. Marc Bloch
6. Perry Anderson
7. Perry Anderson asserts that the feudal social formation was borne out of the catastrophic collision of two modes of production i.e. the primitive Germanic tribal system and the ancient Roman Slave mode of production.
8. The mode of production in which the relations of production were characterized by feudal landlords using political and legal power to extract an economic surplus from an unfree peasantry in the form of feudal rent.
9. The legalised amalgamation of economic exploitation with political authority is termed as extra-economic coercion.
10. Three zones

12.7 Suggested Readings

1. Anderson, Perry, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London and New York: Verso Classics, 1974.
2. Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society*, *Volume I: The Growth of Ties of Dependence*, Second Edition, London, 1962
3. Bloch, Marc,*Feudal Society*, 2 Vols, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.
4. Dev, Arjun, *The Story of Civilization: A History Textbook for Class IX*, Vol. 1, NCERT Publication, New Delhi, 2009.
5. Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formations*, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 2001.
6. Henri Pirenne, 1939, *Mohammad and Charlemagne*, New York, 1939.
7. Leo Huberman, *Man's Worldly Goods: The Story of the Wealth of Nations*, Monthly Review Press,New York, 1936.

12.8 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the early formulations of feudalism in medieval Europe.
2. What, according to Marc Bloch, were the ties of dependence in feudalism?
3. Examine Perry Anderson's theory regarding feudalism.
4. Give a brief account of the concept of feudalism as a mode of production.

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CHAPTER-13
FEUDALISM IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE-II

Structure:

13.0 Introduction

There were extreme regional variations in the social and institutional structures of the feudal societies across Europe, however, it is possible to form a general idea. At one level, it involved the legal disintegration of the kingdom into fragmentary regions, thus making political subjugation an issue of private contract. At another, it established and regularized the relationships of dependence which comprised the unequal exchange of service and protection.

Feudal society possessed a hierarchical structure in which individuals had their designated positions. At the top of this structure was the king who granted fiefs or estates to a number of lords. The lords distributed fiefs to a number of vassals who performed their specified duties and obligations. At the bottom of this hierarchy were the knights who performed military duties. The whole system operated on strong bonds of personal loyalty and allegiance.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the position of Lords and Vassals and their mutual obligations,
- Know the types and nature of fiefs and tenements,
- Learn about the conditions of cultivators and tenents with a manor,
- Discuss the institution of knights in the feudal set up.

13.1 Forms and Structures

The evolution of highly diverse forms, structures, customs and institutions makes it very difficult to depict feudalism as a whole. However, certain components of the system may be considered as its characteristic features.

13.1.1 Lord, Vassals and Homage

The legal complex of acts by which one free man placed himself in the protection of a more powerfullord was known as **commendation**. It comprised a series of obligations which were binding on both parties. The person who commended himself was known as **vassal**. He assumed the obligation of serving and respecting his superior, whom he called his **lord**, with the reservation that this service and respect was well-suited with the maintenance of his position as a free man. The lord agreed to assume the obligation of providing maintenance and protection to the vassal. The validity of commendation depended on the precise accomplishment of the regulations that accompanied these acts.

The ceremony of commendation was called as **homage**.In this,the vassal pledged reverence and submission to his feudal lord and received the symbolic title to his new position (investiture) in exchange. The act of homage comprisedtwo elements: ***immixito manuum***and ***volo***. Literally, *immixito manuum* means a "mixing of hands". It was the ritual in which the vassal, generally kneeling, bareheaded and unarmed, would stretch his clasped hands outward to his lord, who in turn grasped the vassal's hands between his own. *Volo* or the declaration of intention, involved the placing of the vassal's person at the lord's disposition and the lord's acceptance of this surrender was verbally stated.

In the middle of the 8thcentury CE, the Carolingians added**oath of fealty** to the ceremony. In this, the vassal would place his hands on a Bible, or on a casket containingholy relics, and swear that he would never injure the lord in any way and to remain faithful. It reflected the improvement of the status of vassalage.This ceremony emphasised the fact that the vassals, now comprising the members of aristocracy, served as free men. The lord might demand that his vassals repeat such oaths of fealty many times, particularly when he had reason to suspect their loyalty. The act of homage and oath of fealty were considered to be binding until the death of one of the parties and, once the contract had been made, it could not be unilaterally denounced. The act of homage and oath of fealty were followed by a ceremonial kiss (*osculum*, the kiss of friendship), which not onlysignalled the establishment of a *feudal* relationship between lord and vassal but also lent dignity to the status of the vassal. It was a widespread practice in France.

Following the act of homage and the oath of fealty, an act of investiture was performed bywhich an overlord transferred the fief to a vassal and the vassalagreed to assume the obligations of managing the fief which he received on this occasion. In this ritual, the lord handed over some symbolic object to the vassal. In some cases the object was intended to denote the act of concession which was occurring, and the lord retained the object employed, which might be a sceptre, wand, ring, knife, glove etc. In other cases the object remained in the vassal's hands and symbolised the fief itself. It might be a corn-stalk, a piece of earth or grass, a lance, a banner or a pastoral staff etc.

The investiture ceremonysignified the moment from which the vassal acquired his right in the fief. In the later feudal age, the ceremony of the renunciation of a fief was modelled on this rite, where the vassal formally deprived himself of the fief by handing over the lord the same object which had been used for the original investiture.

In its negative aspect,the idea of fealty meant the primary obligation of the vassal of refraining from any act which might pose a danger to the person, property and honour of his lord. The positive aspect of the duty of vassal was to provide certain services to the lord generally categorized as aid (*auxilium*) and counsel (*consilium*). Military service was in the category of aid. The lord possessed vassals so that he might have soldiers at his disposal, and the institution had a military character. As per specific settlements, some vassals were bound to render personal service only, while others were liable to serve with a fixed number of knights, who would generally be their own vassals. Fromthe 11th century, the obligations of vassals were generally known as *auxilium et consilium* (help and advice).*Auxilium* implied military duties to be performed by the vassal.Besidesmilitary duties, the obligation of *auxilium*included duties in the administration of the manor or in the lord's household, the carrying of messages, the providing of escorts, and providing financial aid to the lord as and when required. The payment of the lord's ransom if he was captured, the knighting of his eldest son, the marriage of his eldest daughter, and his departure on a crusade were the most common occasions for such aids. *Consilium* indicated the obligation to appear at imperial assemblies or *hoftage*. Tradition restricted such gatherings to two or three a year. One of the most important of this duty of counsel was to judge the cases which came before the court of lord, under lord's presidency.

On the other hand, the lordowed the obligations of protection and maintenance to his vassal. The lord was bound to defend his vassal against the latter's enemies. Usually, if the vassal had been granted a fief, the lord was bound to permit the vassal its possession by defending it against any attempts which might be made to divest him of it. As far as maintenance was concerned the lord might provide the maintenance either by keeping the vassal in his court and household or by granting him a fief. However, by the 11th century a majority of the vassals were beneficed and not purely domestic, though the grant of a benefice did not essentially exclude other forms of maintenance at the lord's expense.

Since the mutual obligations created by homage and fealty were of a personal character, they could affect anyone outside the two contracting parties. There was no legal relationship known between the lord and the sub-vassal. A vassal might be bound to bring to his lord's service some or all of his own vassals, but the latter had no direct responsibility towards their 'suzerain'. However, when a lord died without a certain heir, his vassals were considered as the vassals of his lord until an heir to the deceased was legally established. Briefly, the rights of a lord in the fiefs of his vassals necessarily reverted on his death without heirs to the lord of whom he ultimately held those fiefs.

There was a provision of sanctions, in theory, in the event of one party failing in his obligations. However, up to the 12thand 13thcenturies they were generally ineffective and in practice the conflicts which followed such violation of agreement were most often settled by armed struggle. Violation of

fealty led to confiscation of the fief, since the grant of the fief was conditioned by the contract and obligations of vassalage. However, in reality, the progressive development of the rights of the vassal over his fief made the process of confiscation difficult.

13.1.2 Evolution and Types of Fiefs

The head of a group of lords had two options. He could either keep the vassal in his house and fulfil his needs, or he could endow him with an estate.The tenure granted by a lord to his vassal for his maintenance which was his due and to provide him with the means of furnishing his lord with the services required by his contract of vassalage was termed as**fief** or**benefice**. Perhaps, household vassals signified an older type of relationship than the beneficed vassals, but from the Carolingian period there was a significant increase in the distribution of the benefices. It was because of the reason that the regular provisioning of a fairly large group proved a rather difficult undertaking for the lord. Moreover, many of the vassals required independent revenues which, associated with the political authority they already exercised empowered them to operate in conditions consistent with their prestige. Apart from this, a *vassus domincus* was supposed to pass the most of his time in his province, exercising his supervisory functions.

Generally, a fief was an estate of land, which could vary greatly in size. It might also be a type of public authority, or a duty or right, including the right to tolls and market dues, the rights of minting and justice, the functions of advocate, mayor, provost, receiver etc. These fiefs which were not associated with any territory but consisted in the right to certain payment made at regular intervals were referred to as '**money fiefs**'. These type of fiefs existed in France, Germany and the Low Countries from the 11th century onwards.However, it was the English monarchy under the Normans and the Angevins that made the most extensive and systematic uses of such money fiefs.In the 10thand 11th centuries, besides their fiefs, the lay vassals often held churches – abbeys, parish churches and chapels whichpermitted them the profits of the tithe, the endowments of the church, andin some cases even the income arising from the spiritual offices themselves.

There was variation in the nature of the rights enjoyed by the lord and the vassal across the centuries. Patrimonialisation and subinfeudation alsosignificantly modified these rights. Initially, in feudalism, the lord held the tenure rights as envisioned in the Roman law, while the vassal was given the rights corresponding to the Roman idea of usufruct which comprised simply using and enjoying the fief and taking its produce. The situation began to change considerably from the 9thcentury as the effective occupation of the fief permitted the vassal to strengthen and bolster his real right over the land, and correspondingly, the power of the lord declined. This was apparent in the manner the fiefs were considered as part of the patrimony or hereditary property of the vassals. Initially given as a form of life tenure that basically represented a stipend, in theory the death of a vassal always ended the enfeoffment and the legal rights of the lord over the fief revived in their entirety. As vassalage was not inherited, the remuneration of the vassal could also not assume a hereditary character. However, the normal practice was that the heir instantly occupied a fief vacated by the predecessor from whom he wished to inherit, and then addressed his request to the lord for investiture within a stipulated time determined by the local custom. The lords usuallyabstained

from denying the father's fief to the son as the lord not only jeopardized discouraging new commendations, he ran the risk of provoking a serious reaction from his other vassals who harboured similar expectations. By the end of the 12th century the investiture of the son in succession to the father acquired a legal status in almost the whole of Europe.

Until the practice of inheritance of fiefs had not become an established custom, the lord could demand a payment from the aspirant before admitting him as a vassal to fealty and homage and investing him with the fief. The payment which the lord obtained on this account was generally known as '**relief**'.It differed on the basis of the significance of a particular fief in question. However, the ecclesiastical tenements were free from the exactions of feudal lords. When the fief went to a minor by hereditary succession, either the close relative of the heir became a vassal of the lord and was responsible for the upkeep and education of the heir during his minority, or the lord himself took over the fief for the time being and enjoy its usufruct, on condition of providing for the maintenance and education of the minor heir. In both the situations, however, the minor possessed the right, on attaining his adulthood, of obtaining the investiture of the fief. Initially, women were completelydeprived of the right of feudal succession, but by the end of the 10thcentury,many females, especially in southern France, Low Countries and Germany were being admitted.

Patrimonialisation of the fief hastened the process of subinfeudation. Ganshofbelieves that the more a vassal regarded a fief as one of the elements in his wealth, the more he regarded it as natural that, like any other family possession, all his children should benefit from it. As a result, the practice of dividing fiefs was slowly established over the greater part of France and Germany, although in England the custom of male primogeniture was much prevalent. Along with indivisibility, the principle of inalienability also lost its vigour. The property element in feudal relationship became increasingly more powerful. The engagements and obligations associated with property rights were no longer personal services and instead became attached to alienable property which might be sold to the highest bidder. Initially, the subinfeudation of all or part of the fief was not allowed to the vassal without the approval of lord. However, from the 10thcentury onwards in France, from the 11th century in Germany and after the Norman Conquest in England, the gift or sale of fiefs by vassals was freely practised without any intervention on the lord's part. Initially, the vassal would have to hand over the fief to his lord, whoafter having received his fealty and homagewould then invest the new aspirant with it. However, later on such complicated customs of resignation and re-investiture were abandoned as the lords could no more effectively oppose the alienation of fiefs. Yet, the lord reserved the right of exacting a payment in the event of a change of holder, and their explicit consent was still considered as vital. The lord's right of pre-emption was also safeguarded.The right of disposal, however,ultimately became much more limited in the case of the lord than it had in that of the vassal.

Multiple vassalage came to be practiced in the closing years of the 9th century. In the 10th and 11th centuries, the vassal paid homage to multiple lords in France and Germany. A number of attempts were made to prevent the weakening of the tie of dependence due to the existence of multiplicity of allegiances.The most significant of them was the system of liegeancy was rampant in France, England, southern Italy and parts of Germany by the end of the 11th century. In this

system, it was recognised that among the many lords of a vassal, there was one who must be served with the full strictness of early vassalage. He was called the **liege lord**because he was the most generous to his vassal and who usually provided the largest benefice to the vassal. Gradually, however, even liege homage got multiplied.

There was an obligation of service connected with the fief which comprised a distinct combination of professional specialisation and individual action. It differed sharply in this respect from the *villein* tenement which was burdened with labour services and in-kindrents. The common*villein* tenement, ranging between ten to thirty acres, was spread out in scattered acre-strips in the two or three openfields of the manor. These holdings belonged to the lord, but in practice, the local custom protected themand they were generally subjected to quasi-legal rules of possession and inheritance on the payment of a tax on regular basis.

13.1.3 Allods

Eventhough the *villein* tenements and the fiefs were the most common mode of holding land, it was not the only type of ownership. There were the 'allods', which remained largely independent due to the porous and restricted nature of the feudal network of dependent ties. The allodial right was a right ofcomprehensive ownership, without any conditions of service or payment associated with it. Whilethe feudal tenure rapidly spread at the expense of the allodial rights from the 10thcentury onwards, the allodial rights continued to persistmainly in southern France and Germany. Marc Bloch claims that in the countries which had imported feudalism, developed itin much more systematically than in those where its development had been more deeply rooted in local customs and practices. Hence, allod was allowed neither in Syria nor in England. All land belonged to a lord and there was an unbroken line of succession all the way up to the king. However, for most of Europe, independent peasant holdings were very common. It must be made clear that they did not completely escape the economic exploitation of the seigneurial class who controlled the local markets and the regional economy. Frequently, the allodialists were required to pay levies directly or indirectly through an intermediary on regular basis. The vagaries of feudalism made their economies vulnerable to their small individual or collective scale.

13.1.4 Manors

In the feudal order, manor was the fundamental unit of economic production as well as social life. It wasa cluster of small dependent farms directly under a lord and cultivated by serfs or peasant cultivators bound to the soil. The origins of manor can be traced back to the Roman institution of *colonate* or *villae*. But the acquisition of new powers by the manors through the fusion of different kinds of tenures and the transferof many allods to the control of a powerful individual coincided only with the development of the feudal relationship. Manors expanded both by means of force and contracts.

The estates were fairly small areas among vast stretches of forest and wastelands. A typical manor consisted of peasant households clustered together in makeshift homes around the church, grist and stone mill, blacksmith shop, winepress, bakery and other facilities. A majority of the daily needs of the peasants was catered with the goods produced within the manor. However,

purchases had to be made outside the villagefor meeting the needs of the lord and his family. Generally, the village was located in the centre of the cultivable land. As a rule, the peasants lived, worked and died within the lord's estate and were buried in the village churchyard. The world of the medieval peasant was basically the world and experience of the manor estate.

The feudal lords resided inspacious castle or the large and well-defended manor house in contrast to the cruck houses of peasants. The concern of lords to preserve, consolidate and expand their lordships resulted inminor arms races with neighbours. Wars were fought for plunder and conquest. The vital elements for the attacker were surprise and mobility, while the effective response for the defender was to keep wealth and human resources in well-fortified and well-garrisoned places. Generally, the campaigns were restricted to the months immediately before the harvest and wasting the countryside was considered an effective strategy to pressurize the enemy. In the high middle ages,particularly, there was expensive developments in the construction of fortifications. When a rival lord attacked a manor, the peasants generally found protection inside the castle.

The remaining part of the manor usually consisted of the cultivable land, the meadowland and the wasteland. Generally, farmland was divided into strips of ploughed land, worked mutually by the peasants. Crops and peasant holdings were thus scattered in the different fields of the manor. Adjoining agricultural land lay mostly open fields, forests and wasteland, and a large amount of land called as the commons land which was open to all.

A large part of the manorial population consisted of servile peasantry of varied origins. The word 'serf' was used to denote the lowest stratum of the society. They were tied to the land which they did not own, had no freedom of movement, of buying and selling land and commodities, of disposing of their own labour, of marrying and founding a family, and of leaving property to their heirs. Slavery of the ancient world and the Dark Ages was one of thesource of feudal serfdom. When the Roman landowners startingdistributing vast portions of their former estates, which were no longer profitable under direct exploitation, they allotted a certain number of indivisible tenements (*mansi*) to their slaves in exchange for tithes on crops, service in the lord's own fields and numerous other types of dues. The control of social justice and the offer of protection were also used to reduce free peasants to slavery, making them hereditarily bound to their tenements and accountable to arbitrary levies and labour services. Low crop yields and flight from the invaders led some freemen to surrender their liberty, but the pressure from above was probably more powerful than the consent from below. David Whitton has pointedout that the most rapid subjugation of the peasantry came not in the 10th century, the period of maximum volatility, but rather in the 11th century when there was improvement in the harvests.

The servile peasantry was responsible for fulfilling several obligations for the lord. Every *villein* household was supposed to send a labourer, oxen and ploughfor work on the lord's farm for about half the number of days in the week. Apart from these, there werecountless varieties of manual work such as the erection and keeping up of hedges, the preservation of dykes, canals, ditches and roads, the thrashing and garnering of corn, the tending and shearing of sheep and so on. During the times of mowing and reaping very burdensome services were required. The villain

was required to gain the consent of the lord as well as pay a small fee before his marriage. A lord had the right to select a wife for his serf and force him to marry her. There were also a number of other substantial dues to be paid to the lord: the head tax (literally, a tax on existence), the *taille* (a money levy on the serf's property), and the heriot (an inheritance tax). The medieval serfs paid numerous banalities which were taxes paid to use the lord's mills, ovens and presses. The *villeins* had to render hens, eggs, wax, and other special payments to the clergy on several occasions besides paying tithe on a regular basis.

There existed substantial freeholders within the manor. These were the tenants who stood to the lord in a relation of definite agreement, paying certain fixed rents or executing certain specified services which, though arduous, did not amount to the general obligation of rural labour incumbent on the *villeins*. The freeholders could seek protection for their rights in the royal courts and thereby acquired a privileged position with respect to holdings, dues and services in relation to the *villeins*. The freeholders had not only to participate in the management of the manorial village community but also to obey its decisions. They were not free to use their plots as they wished, to manage their cultivable land and pasture in severalty and to keep up a separate and independent husbandry. They were liable to pay fines if they disobeyed the rules laid down by the community. All types of dues were imposed equally on the *villeins* and the freemen. Both of them joined to frame the by-laws and to declare the customs and economic practices that ruled the life of the village.

Gradually, from the class of *villeins* and freeholders, an internally differentiated body of manorial staff emerged to ensure efficient management of the manorial economy. It consisted of stewards and seneschals who had to act as supervisors to preside in the manorial courts, to keep accounts, to represent the lord on all occasions and so on. It was in the interest of the lord himself to reinforce the customary order which prevented the powerful intermediaries from ruining the peasantry by coercion and indiscriminate rule. This led to the enrolments of custom as to holdings and services from the 12thcentury. They acted as a safety measure for the interests of the tenants and of the lord. This growth of the manorial staff indicatedthe emerging differentiation within the peasant class.

13.1.5 Knights, Tournaments and Chivalry

In the feudal system, a**knight** was a specially trained mounted warrior in the service of his lord. The horse-mounted soldier was of great importance to an army and of great value to the lords during the period when there was a constant threat of invasion by nomadic tribes and aggressive neighbours. In the time of danger, they garrisoned the castle in rotation and rallied to its defence. They were also used to intimidate and force the peasants into paying dues etc. The position of the feudal knights was far more socially strengthened than their Roman predecessors, the *equites*.

Initially, becoming a knight was very simple. Any soldier could be knighted by any other knight after proving himself in the battle. However, as the time passed chivalry became much more complex. Sons of nobles destined for knighthood had to undergo a long and careful training at an early age. At age 7, he was taken from his mother's keeping, and sent to the castle of another lord.

Hewas educated with the children of the lord and other high-born boys. Thus, the boy becomes a page, or knight's attendant. Masters taught him some book learning, languages, music, singing, and the art of making rhymes. Good manners were given great importance, as courtesy was one of the most essential characteristics of a knight. However, physical culture was the most important part of his training. From the age of fourteen, when he was promoted to the rank of a squire or knight's assistant, he was gradually taught to use knightly weapons, to bear the weight of knightly armour, to ride, to jump, to wrestle, to swim, to hunt, to hawk, to fight, and to bearall kinds of fatigues. Squires were supposed to take care of the knight's horses, armour, weapons, and clothing. Expert squires also accompanied their lords in battle, and took charge of his prisoners. After the squire proved his worth in the battle, an elaborate religious ceremony initiated him into knighthood.

Towards the close of the 10thcentury, together with hunting,**tournaments**emerged as the major amusement of the knights, which was also a way for warriors to practise working together and rehearse their combat skills. They also provided a proving ground for the knights looking for service. Legal disputes frequently settled after the contestants had asked God to grant victory to the righteous. The *tourney proper* was an encounter between two bodies of knights while the *joust* was a one-on-one combat. Generally the fights were held in enclosures before an audience. The opponents were not necessarily enemies. They often fought for the honour of their ladies or their sovereign, or to gain fame in arms for themselves. Not all were allowed to participate in the tournament.Those who had harmed the Church, been false to his lord, fled without any reason from the battlefield, made a false oath, committed an outrage on a woman, engaged in trade, or could not prove his descent from a noble family were barred from taking part in a tournament. The victor was entitled to the armour, weapons and horse of the conquered, and could also demand a ransom for his person. In the early contests no particular safeguard was taken for preventing deaths. The armours and weapons that were used in the real battlefield were also used in the tournaments. However, the princes and the kings were worried about the mounting financial and human losses that the tournaments caused and their potential for breeding political conspiracies. The Church tried to impose a ban on the dangerous amusement and even threatened to deny Christian burial to any knight killed in a tourney. But the institution had already evolved into a grand popular spectacle. Merchants often organised small fairs to attract the visitors. Therefore, instead of prohibiting tournaments, different measures were adopted to bring them under control. One such attempt was the development oflicensing system in England by Richard I in 1192 CE. Restrictions were also imposed on the dangerous form of combat practice. The joust, where two mounted knights raced towards each other in a test of skill and nerve, was increasingly encouraged to test the horsemanship and weapons skill of the individual knight. Safety measuressuch as blunt-tipped lances, coronals, tilt barriers and more protective armours, were also adopted.

The tournaments greatly contributed in theshaping of the idealised code of conduct for medieval knights which was known as **chivalry**. The word chivalry was derived from the French word *cheval*, meaning 'horse'. The word gradually came to be associated with 'chevalier' (mounted

warrior). It dignifiedcourtesy and courage in battle, generosity to one's inferiors and loyalty to one's lord. Chivalry required knights to be brave. Even the slightest insult was to be avenged by blood. He was required to fight in a fair manner. Tricks and strategy were considered cowardly. Honour required that he never failed his lord or avoided a challenge. The true knight was not supposed to strike an unarmed or unprepared enemy. A knight had to be loyal to his friends, keep his word and treat conquered foes courteously.As the Church became involved in the Crusades, love of God and the defence of the Christian principles was added to the code of chivalry. Chivalry immensely improved the rough and crude behaviour of the early feudal lords. However, behaviour did not become perfect by any moral standards. The knight was courteous only towards the people of his own class and was rude towards all others.In addition, he was supposed to be courteous to women. Although it was held that a knight should help all ladies, especially if they had been deprived of their rights, or were in distress of any kind, he was expected to choose one as the special object of his attraction. He fought for her both in war and tournaments to win her grace or to enhance her reputation. However, chivalry might be understood more as a normative guide of knightly behaviour than as a true reflection of what the knights actually did. The development of firearms in the 13thcentury considerably reduced the importance of cavalry and knightly armours and weapons.Knighthood increasingly became outdated both in terms of efficiency and expense in the changed context of the growing commercial and urban culture. In polite society chivalry was transformed into a code of gentlemanly manners.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Define commendation.
2. What was homage?
3. What do you understand by the term fief?
4. What were money fiefs?
5. What were allods or allodial lands?
6. What was oath of fealty?
7. Who was serf?
8. Who was knight in feudal system?
9. Define joust.
10. What was chivalry?

13.2 Summary

- The form and structure of feudalism was not uniform in the whole of Europe and there were substantial variations in different regions.
- The feudal ties comprised a sequence of obligations binding on lords, vassals and peasants. The person who granted land was called a lord. The person who received land in return for services was called a vassal. The grant of land was called a fief.
- The granting and holding of a fief was actually a contract between lord and vassal.

- In feudal system, homage and acknowledgement of obligation of loyalty to lord was the governing principle.
- The fief in the form of a landed estate was of varying size. It was also in the form of public authority or a duty or right.
- Detailed rules governed the inheritance of fiefs where lords had their defined powers.
- The peasantry within a manor had a sort of stratification some enjoying rights and others completely subjugated.
- The cultivators were subjected to heavy land tax and various cesses.
- The institution of knights emerged out of the need for armed power to protect the manors and suppress opposition inside it.
- The tournaments greatly contributed in the shaping of the idealized code of conduct for medieval knights which was known as chivalry.

13.3 Glossary

- **Accolade:** Bestowal of knighthood.
- **Enfeoffment:** Invest a person with land or fief under the feudal system.
- **Low Countries:** Netherlands (Holland), Belgium and Luxembourg.
- **Right of Pre-emption:** The right of lord to substitute himself if he wished for the purchaser by paying him back the price which he had paid for the fief.
- **Sceptre:** A staff borne as symbol of personal sovereignty or imperial authority.
- **Tithe:** Tax of one tenth, tenth part of annual produce of land or labour taken for support of Church and clergy.
- **Wand:** A slender rod for carrying in hand or setting in ground.
- ***Vassus domincus*:** A senior vassal.

13.4 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. The legal complex of acts by which one free man placed himself in the protection of a more powerful lord was known as commendation.
2. The ceremony of commendation was called as homage.
3. The tenure granted by a lord to his vassal for his maintenance which was his due and to provide him with the means of furnishing his lord with the services required by his contract of vassalage was termed as fief or benefice.
4. The fiefs which were not associated with any territory but consisted in the right to certain payment made at regular intervals were referred to as 'money fiefs'.
5. In the medieval times an allod is an estate in land over which the allodial landowner had full ownership and right of alienation.
6. Fealty was an oath of fidelity made by the vassal. In it he promised not to harm his lord or to do damage to his property.

7. Serf was an agricultural labourer during the medieval period in Europe. He was bound to work on his lord's estate and was under the lord's will but he was entitled to lord's protection.
8. In the feudal system, knight was the mounted warrior in the service of his lord.
9. Joust was a medieval sporting contest in which two opponents on horseback fought with lances.
10. Chivalry refers to the lifestyle and moral code followed by medieval knights. It is derived from the word *chevalier,* the French word for knight. Chivalry included the values of honour, valour, courtesy, and purity, as well as loyalty to a lord, a cause, or a noblewoman.

13.5 Suggested Readings

1. Anderson, Perry, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, Verso; New Edition, 1996.
2. Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society.* Tr. L.A. Manyon. Two volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
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6. Reynolds, Susan, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

13.6 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the rights and obligations of lords and vassals in feudatory relations.
2. What was the nature of fief? How was it inherited? How did it change?
3. Write a short note on Allods.
4. Examine the conditions of different kinds of cultivators in a manor.
5. Who were knights? What was their significance in a feudal set up?



CHAPTER-14
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MANORIAL SYSTEM

Structure

14.0 Introduction

The Manor System was an important feature of society in the Middle Ages. During the period of the Middle Ages, European society was chiefly based on the social structure of feudalism. The Manor System in Europe was vital to the overall Feudal System, particularly in Western Europe where it is best associated. The Manor System in Western Europe during the Middle Ages originated from the earlier villa system that was prevalent in the Roman Empire. While the Roman Empire collapsed in Western Europe in the 5thcentury, the practice of the villa system continued throughout the region and came to be known as Manorialism.

Manorialism was a system of landholding in which a feudal lord lived in and managed a country home (manor) with attached farm land, woodlands and villages. The land was for the use of the lord of the manor with surrounding homes in the farmland and villages that contained spaces for serfs who were tenants to the lord of the manor. Organizing society and creating agricultural goods was the purpose of the Manor System.

Manor system as a social concept came to an end as European society transformed through the major events of the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and French Revolution. It was substituted with the emergence of capitalism and the principles of private property and economic freedom popularized by Adam Smith in the 18th century.

Objectives

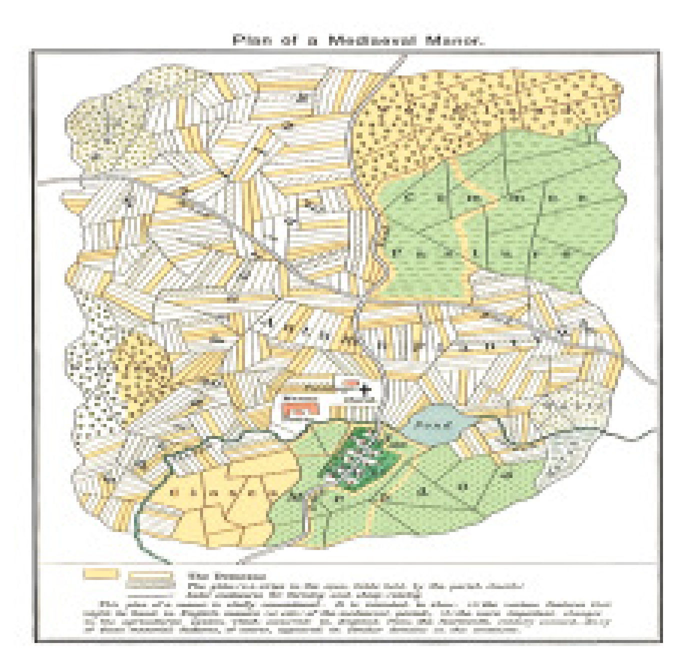
After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Manor System,
- Know about the Manorial Agriculture,
- Explain the advantages of Manor System,
- Learn about the disadvantages of Manoralism,
- Analyze the causes of the decline of the Manor System.

14.1 TheManorial System

In Western and Central Europemost of the farm land was divided into areas known as 'manors'. Manor was a big estate where the land was owned by a lord, the common people were attached to the land on which they had a right to work, and the serfs paid the lord for the use of land for protection.Manors differed in different places in size, organization, and relationship between the people on them, but their main feature was to some extent similar.

Every manorial state possessed a lord. It was a popular maxim of the feudal period that there was "no lord without land, no land without a lord". The lord of the manor was considered as the "tenant", the holder, instead of the absolute owner of his estate. He was a tenant of another lord higher up in the order.Only the king had the absolute ownership of the land. The serf held his land from the lord of the manor, who sequentially "held" the land from a count, who in turn "held" the land from a duke, who in turn "held" the land from the king. The lord who might hold his manor either from the king or form some other lord who held it from king, was secure in its ownership, and legally he could not be dispossessed of it unless he committed treason.



Plan of Medieval Manor

Source:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6b/Plan_mediaeval_manor.jpg

There was the manorial village in the centre of the manor whichdominated by a castle or manor house.This was much more firmly constructed as compared to the cottages of the commoners. The manor house was always fortified. The lord of the manor resided in this house with his family, servants and officials who managed his estate. The dwellings of the serfs were clusteredtogether for safety a short distance away from the manor house. These were mud or wooden huts roofed with thatch having only one or two rooms. If there were two rooms, the main room was utilized for cooking, eating and other household activities. The second was the family bedroom. Whereas the manor house was of more than one story containing many rooms. There was a well or fountainsomewhere within the village where people fetched their water. To keep out the marauders, there was a stone wall with heavy gates of wood reinforced with iron around the whole village, which were closed at night to keep out plunderers.

The manorial system was based on self-sufficiency. The serfs and peasants raised or produced nearly everything that they and their lord required for daily life such as crops, milk, cheese, fuel, cloth, leather etc. Salt, iron, and a few uncommon objects like millstones were the only outside purchases.However, complete self-sufficiency wasnever accomplished. It remained an unachievable ideal,however, reduction of external trade to a minimum was considered as a symbol of good management. Natural economy was prevalent on a medieval manor. Goods were exchanged for goods.There was hardly any use of money in manorial transactions.

14.1.1 Manorial Agriculture

The land of the manor extended out from the village and included forests, pastures, meadow's waste and cultivable fields.All except cultivable land were used in common.Since tillage was the principal economic activity of the people, the cultivable land was of great significance. It was divided into two parts.One part usually about one-third of the whole, belonged to the lord and was called his **demesne**.The other part belonged to the tenants who actually worked on the land. An interesting feature of the manorial system was that the land of every farmer was not all in one place, but was scattered into small strips intermingled with the others. No fences existed on the great cultivable fields. The strips were marked off by a row of stones or a grass balk of the width of a furrow left unploughed. Strip farming was thecharacteristic feature of the feudal period.This arrangement was generally known as the "**open field system**".

Initially, the manorial agriculture was carried on under the open field system which finally gave place to the three field system. Under the two field system the cultivable land was divided into two parts, one of which would be sowed and the other left to lie fallow to recover its fertility.Under the three field system, the cultivated land of the manor was divided into three large fields for growing grain. Only two of the three fields were planted each year and the third field was left fallow, or unplanted, to enable it to regain its fertility.The peasants were aware of the fact that planting the same crop each year in the same place was not good for the soil.So every year, they moved their crops from one field to the other. One year the food crops such as wheat or rye might be cultivated in one field, alongside barley or oats in the second field and the third field would be kept fallow.

The yield was poor as it never averaged more than six to eight bushels per acre. The type of crop to be grown and the time of reaping were fixed by custom, to which all strip holders were expected to follow.

14.1.2 Residents of the Manor

The residents of the manor may be classified as free and unfree.The free comprised the lord of the manor himself, his bailiff, the village priest, and many other free men.The free men were independent landlords and had never owed labour services, but simply paid a tax to their overlord. However, the unfree were the economically important class as they provided nearly all the labour supply of the manor.

A majority of peasants on a manor were serfs who were tied to the land. They could not leave the land without the permission of the lord.The peasants lived in cruck houses. In these type of houses wattle and daub was plastered on the wooden frame. This was a mixture of mud, straw and manure. The straw provided insulation to the wall and the manure bounded the entire mixture thereby providing it the necessary strength. The roofs were thatched. Long time spent by peasants doing backbreaking work on his scattered fields made their daily life very hard. Thus,they managed to earn a miserable living from the soil.They worked on the land owned by the lords as well as on their own holdings. The peasants were forced to work two or three days each week on the lord's land without pay. Sometimes during the busy season in the year they were called up on to do additional work known as **boon work**.The lord's demesne had to be ploughed first, sowed first, and reaped first. Apart from this, the serfswere bound to deliver to his lord some of the produce of his own land, may be fish or honey, or a lamb in spring, a pig in the late fall, a duck at Christmas and eggs at Easter. They were also subject to additional payments upon special occasions.When he gave a daughter in marriage, he was supposed to make a payment in goods or money. When the lord was in great need, as for example during the time of war, the serf had to pay an amount determined randomly by the lord and hence subject to considerable abuse. The serf had to pay fees for the use of the lords' gristmill, drink making equipment and bakery. In the event of death of a serf, his heirs had to deliver their best animal or some other subject of value to the lord and if a serf died without direct heirs, the lord confiscated his property. The peasant had also to pay a tithe to the church, which was 10 % of the value of what he produced. The peasants were not mere slaves.Most of the tenants were called 'serfs' from the Latin word 'servos' which means "a slave". Where the slave could be bought or sold anywhere, anytime, the serf could not be sold away from the land.If the land was granted to a new lord, the serfs became the tenants of the new lord.



Serfs Working in Fields

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reeve_and_Serfs.jpg

Although the serf was ill-treated, he had his family and a home and some land.He also secured help from the lord during the times of famine and other calamities. There were many degrees of serfdom.These were "demesne serfs" who were permanently attached to the lord's house and worked in his fields.Poor peasants known as "*bordars*" held small-holdings at the edge of the village and "*cotters*" occupying only a cottage. Then there were "*villeins*" who occupied a social space between a free peasant and a slave. Most of the medieval European peasants were *villeins*. Some *villeins* were exempt from "boon work" and gave only the regular labour services.Others gave no services at all, but paid the lord a part of their produce.Still others gave no services, but made payments in money in its place. Some *villeins* were almost as prosperous as free men.

14.1.3 Advantages of Manorial System

The advantages of manorial system are considerable. It protected the civilization from the attacks of barbarians. It provided for defence at a time when the king was unable to protect the people. The manorial system was worthily suited in the middle Ages. The manorial people enjoyed some amount of security. They were not liable to the misfortunes which sometimes affect the welfare of the working man today.There was no fear of unemployment. Neither old age nor sickness was to them an economic disaster.

Manorial systemled to social harmony on the basis of faithfulness. The society was bound together by mutual obligations, loyalty and service.The lord depended on his vassal, who in sequence depended on the lord. It encouraged co-operation in farming activities. It provided solidarity to the peasant society. The feudal society was similar to "mutual insurance society".

It resolved the economic problems of the society by providing for agricultural production and the making of different kinds of commodities. Though the serfs had to work hard they enjoyed sufficient leisure. They had the time for play and recreation. It was not to the lord's interest to oppress his serfs. By keeping crop-lands, animals and implements mainly private, the medieval manor avoided some of the most obvious external diseconomies of primitive communism.

14.1.4 Disadvantages of Manorial System

Under the manorial system of cultivation there was hardly any scope for initiative and innovation. Communal cultivation, controlled by tradition, prevented intelligent and innovative men from making experiments.Farmers could not introduce new crops into the rotation without the consent of entire village, because all crops had to be harvested simultaneously. Scientific breeding of livestock could not advance with the promiscuous intermingling of everybody's animals, and animal diseases spread rapidly. When farmers attempted toexpand their territory by stealing a furrow from their neighbour there were bitter disputes and litigations. The manorial system caused a lot of wastage of time. Strip farming caused the villagers to waste much time walking from strip to strip. Manorial system of cultivation was less productive. Under this system, scientific cultivation was impossible. Weeds thrived and scattered the seeds from the uncultivated boundaries and good drainage was not possible. Sub-standardagricultural implements and inefficient cattle and the very limited use of manure resulted in low productivity.

Manorial system of cultivation led to extreme inequality between theserfs and the lords. The serf worked the land and the lord worked the serf.Insofar as the lord was concerned there was not much difference between the serf and any of the live-stock on his demesne.

The living standards of the peasants was very poor. Men and the women had to labourfor a very long time in the fields. They resided in unhealthy surroundings. They quality of the food they consumed was poor. They rarely ate meat because they required animals to aid them in their fields. The common people and the serfs were exploited by the selfish barons in the times of peace and in war.

Due to manorial system, the society became stagnant instead of progressive and dynamic. The manor was a small world in itself in which the people took birth and died without any knowledge about the outside world.

14.2 Decline of Manorial System

. A number of factors have been attributed for the decline of manor system. The Crusades or the Holy Wars between the Muslims and Christians greatly contributed to the decline of manorial system. These wars weakened the nobles. They lost profoundly in terms of men and money. A large number of them died, and those who returned had lost much of their wealth.The nobles impoverished as a result of crusades started selling their feudal rights.

Technological progress occurred in agriculture, industry, transportation and communication which was followed by a commercial revolution. There was a rise in trade with expanding markets. Therefore, there was greater specialization in production on a large scale rather than for use which tended to deteriorate the manorial system.

The rise of towns gave a serious blow to the manorial system. A number of serfs were able to have their freedom from baronial control, by paying a large amount of money and securing charters of rights. Towns also enabled serfs to have their freedom. The serfs who wanted to leave job could take refuge in the rapidly growing cities where life was based on commerce and industry. As per thetradition if a serf ran away to a pearly town, and escaped detection for one year and one day after his escape, he would earn his freedom. A number of serfs escaped to the towns, and evaded detection for a period longer than the specified period.

More and more lands were brought under cultivation. The new agricultural lands presented favourable conditions to attract labour, and freedom was often granted to any serf who would work there for a year and a day.

The growth of nation states witnessed a change in military power and responsibility for defence from lords to kings. The kings maintained a professional army for the purpose. The innovative peasants became independent of the services provided by the lorddue to improved implements and tools.

The manorial system was also weakened due to the rise of the middle class.This class of people were against the mischievous and exploiting feudal barons, and they were ready to help the king in crushing the power of the nobles.

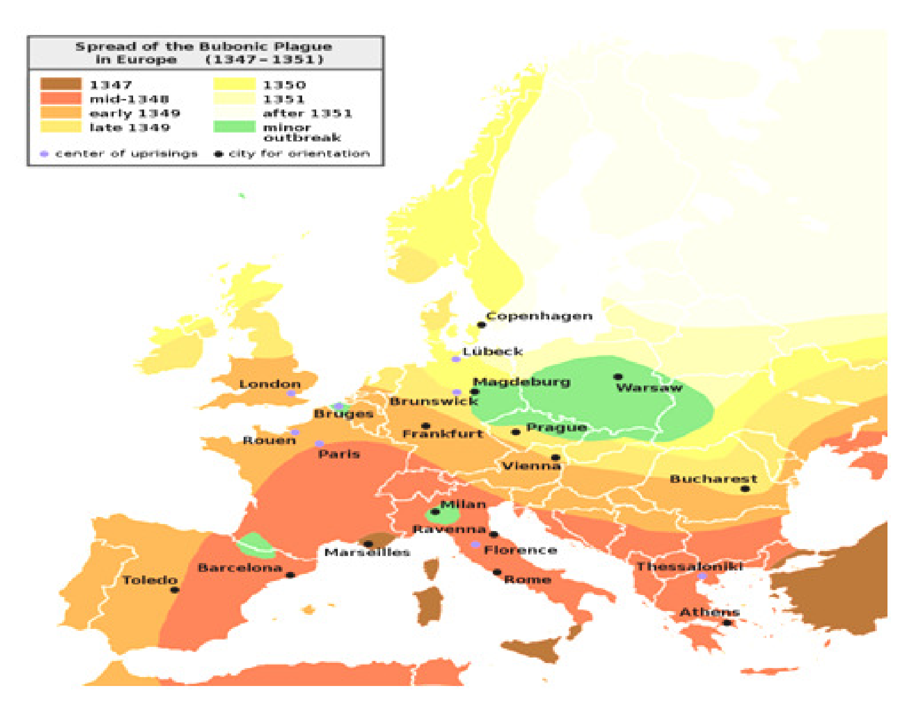
The enclosure movement also one of the factors for the decline of the manorial system. With the rise in population, the *villeins* applied to the lords for seeking permission to cultivate a portion of the waste land. The lords granted permission for this and charged a money rent for these portions. Instead of cultivating small strips of land, the *villeins* cultivated such lands in compact blocks of 5 to 10 acres. The enclosures introduced a much more efficient system of farming. It also gave provided an opportunity to sell their surplus produced to their neighbouring towns.

The lord needed money to purchase the goods that only the merchants could supply. As a result he began to convert or commute his serf's obligation into money. This meant that many serfs made payment to their lord instead of labour, or paid a fee to be absolved from some of the labour or even bought their freedom. The peasants toiled in the fields and collected money with which he could buy off some of his labour services to his lord. This development proved to be a milestone in the decline of serfdom. Also, with the passage of time, the lords were required to pay their-own taxes in money and the need for increase in their money incomes was quite understandable. Generally, the week-work was commuted first, but later on the boon work was also counted in. *Villeins* who commuted were made independent from the unpleasant part of their villeinage. The lords also learned from experience that free labour was more fruitful than unfree labour. These changes have occurred very slowly, however, they had a tremendous impact. Commutation aided in a considerable increase in production. It also reduced frictions in society and reduced wastage of time and energy too.

The role played by money became extensive. It gained importance as a store of value. This affected fundamental relations. A number of lords werekeen to free many of their serfsfor some price. Lords having good land could earn a handsome profit by selling freedom to their serfs, renting the land and certain implements out to them and living off the proceeds.

The position of lords in the society weakened as he faced a deteriorating labour market. The increase in power and wealth of the towns tempted progressively more serfs to run away and made it difficult for their former lords to recapture them. On top of this arrived the Bubonic Plague or Black Death of 1347 CE which rapidly spread throughout Europewiping out more than one third of Europe's population. Labour shortage had put the agricultural workers in strong position and had given them a sense of their power. They demanded higher wages.The *villeins* and the *cotters* who

had commuted could benefit from increase in wages. Those who had not commuted clamoured for commutation of their services. However, the lords preferred to keep the *villeins* in their services and even attempted to make them work harder than before. This caused much disputes between the lords and *villeins*. Gradually the lords were compelled to grant them commutation. Thus by the beginning of the 16th century, villeinage had completely gone and there was emergence of a free peasantry.



Map of Spread of Bubonic Plague or Black Death of 1347 CE

Source:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/Bubonic_plague_map.PNG

The collapse of feudalism and the establishment of new production relations represented by capitalism were not accomplished without bloody revolution. Due toincreasing exploitation and coercion of the serfs by feudal lords there were a number of revolts of the peasants against them.During the feudal period a large number of peasant uprisings against the landlords occurred in severalEuropean countries such as England, France, Germany and Russia. However, theseuprisings were suppressed mercilessly by the landlords as they controlled the government. But these uprisings shook the foundations of manoralism and ultimately led to its fall.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Define Manorialism.
2. What was demesne?
3. What do you understand by open-field system?
4. What was boon work?
5. Who were Villeins?
6. Give any one advantage of the Manorial System.
7. What was the disadvantage of Manorial System?

8. What was the impact of Manorial System on the society?
9. Write any two causes for the decline of Manorialism.
10. How did the rise of towns was responsible for the decline of Manor System?

14.3Summary

- The Manor System was an important feature of society in the Middle Ages. It was vital to the overall Feudal System, particularly in Western Europe where it is best associated.
- In Western and Central Europe most of the farm land was divided into areas known as 'manors'. .
- Manorialism was a system of landholding in which a feudal lord lived in and managed a country home (manor) with attached farm land, woodlands and villages.
- The land was for the use of the lord of the manor with surrounding homes in the farmland and villages that contained spaces for serfs who were tenants to the lord of the manor. Organizing society and creating agricultural goods was the purpose of the Manor System.
- The manorial system was based on self-sufficiency. The serfs and peasants raised or produced nearly everything that they and their lord required for daily life.
- The land of the manor extended out from the village and included forests, pastures, meadow's waste and cultivable fields.
- Land was divided into two parts. One part usually about one-third of the whole, belonged to the lord and was called his demesne. The other part belonged to the tenants who actually worked on the land.
- Strip farming was the characteristic feature of the feudal period. This arrangement was generally known as the "open field system". This system finally gave place to the three field system.
- The residents of the manor may be classified as free and unfree. The free comprised the lord of the manor himself, his bailiff, the village priest, and many other free men. The unfree were the economically important class as they provided nearly all the labour supply of the manor.
- A majority of peasants on a manor were serfs who were tied to the land. They resided in cruck houses. Sometimes during the busy season in the year they were called up on to do additional work known as boon work.
- Although the serf was ill-treated, he had his family and a home and some land. He also secured help from the lord during the times of famine and other calamities.
- There were many degrees of serfdom. There were demesne serfs, *bordars*, *cottars* and *villeins*.
- The advantages of manorial system are considerable. It protected the civilization from the attacks of barbarians. It led to social harmony on the basis of faithfulness. It resolved the economic problems of the society by providing for agricultural production and the making of different kinds of commodities.

- Under the manorial system of cultivation there was hardly any scope for initiative and innovation. This system led to extreme inequality between the serfs and the lords.
- Under manorial system, the living standards of the peasants was very poor. Men and the women had to labour for a very long time in the fields.
- Due to manorial system, the society became stagnant instead of progressive and dynamic.
- A number of factors have been attributed for the decline of manor system. The Crusades or the Holy Wars between the Muslims and Christians greatly contributed to the decline of manorial system.
- There was greater specialization in production on a large scale rather than for use which tended to deteriorate the manorial system. The rise of towns gave a serious blow to the manorial system.
- The growth of nation states witnessed a change in military power and responsibility for defence from lords to kings which led to decline of manorial system. The manorial system was also weakened due to the rise of the middle class.
- The enclosure movement also one of the factors for the decline of the manorial system. Commutation aided in a considerable increase in production. It also reduced frictions in society and reduced wastage of time and energy too.
- Increasing role of money also caused decline of feudalism. Lords having good land could earn a handsome profit by selling freedom to their serfs.
- The Bubonic Plague or Black Death of 1347 CE wiped out one-third of Europe's population leading to decline of manorial system.
- Due to increasing exploitation and coercion of the serfs by feudal lords there were a number of revolts of the peasants against them which led to decline of manorialism.

14.4 Glossary

- **Bailiff:** A free man appointed by the lord to direct agricultural work on the demesne.
- **Commutation:**Conversion of the value of labour services into a monetary payment.
- ***Easter:*** *It* is a Christian holiday that celebrates the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- **Meadow:** A *meadow* is an open habitat, or field, vegetated by grasses, herbs, and other non-woody plants.
- **Strip cropping:***Strip cropping* is a method of farming which comprises cultivating a field divided into long, narrow strips which are alternated in a crop rotation system.

14.5 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Manorialism, also known as the manor system or manorial system, was the method of land ownership in parts of Europe, especially England, during the Middle Ages.
2. A piece of land attached to a manor and retained by the owner for their own use is called as demesne.
3. Open-field system was the traditional medieval system of farming, in which land was divided into strips and cultivated by an individual only in the growing season, being available to the community for grazing animals during the rest of the year.

4. A manorial duty of the peasants when they were called to do additional work in busy season as ploughing and harvesting was called as boon work.
5. A villein was the most common type of serf in the Middle Ages. They had more rights and a higher status than the lowest serf, but existed under a number of legal restrictions that distinguished them from freemen.
6. It protected the civilization from the attacks of barbarians. It provided for defence at a time when the king was unable to protect the people.
7. Farmers could not introduce new crops into the rotation without the consent of entire village, because all crops had to be harvested simultaneously.
8. Due to manorial system, the society became stagnant instead of progressive and dynamic. The manor was a small world in itself in which the people took birth and died without any knowledge about the outside world.
9. Crusades and Black Death.
10. The serfs who wanted to leave job could pay a large sum of money for their freedom from baronial control and take refuge in the rapidly growing towns where life was based on commerce and industry.

14.6 Suggested Readings

1. Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society: Vol 1: The Growth and Ties of Dependence* (2 ed.), Routledge, 1989.
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14.7 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the Manorial System in detail.
2. Write a note on Manorial Agriculture.
3. Give an account of the residents of the Manor.
4. What were the advantages of Manorial System?
5. Discuss the various disadvantages of the Manorilaism.
6. Elucidate the causes for the fall of Manorial System.

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CHAPTER-15
STATE, SOCIETY AND RELIGION IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL CHINA

Structure

15.0 Introduction

The social and political order of late medieval China was one of the most stable and most highly organised in the world. Here, a large number of people were bound together over such a wide geographical area by a single political, social and cultural values and traditions, for such a length of time. It had a remarkable capacity to bear the shocks of civil war, natural calamities and foreign invasion, and to accommodate substantial social and economic development and growth of population.

Late medieval China has been characterised in a number of different ways. It has been called as "oriental despotism", or a "bureaucratic society". It has also been termed as a "gentry society" or a "Confucian society". In China the bureaucracy was unique in ancient and medieval period and played an important role in the affairs of the state. It was chiefly an agrarian society

which was dominated by the gentry. The basic units of social structure were family and clan. Although Confucianism was not strictly a religion but it influenced the religion and society for remote future.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Learn about the main features of the Imperial State of China,
- Explain the characteristics of the society of China and in the late medieval period,
- Understand religion in the late medieval China.

15.1 The Chinese State

Perhaps the most noteworthy product of traditional Chinese civilization was the Imperial State. With a long tradition its iron frame held China together as a single political unit since times immemorial down to modern times. It was governed by theEmperor, known as the “Son of Heaven”. His authority and prestige was recognised by people even outside the administrative boundaries of China. It’s most characteristic feature, however, was rule by means of a highly structured bureaucracy or elite corps of officials, the known as **mandarins** who were recruited through a system of examinations based on scholarship. This state came into existence in a recognisable form in 221 BCE, when the ruler of the feudal state of Qin, unified China and proclaimed himself as the First Emperor. The entire kingdom was divided into standard administrative units and ruled directly by the Emperor through his officials. Although this system experiencedconsiderable modifications under later dynasties, and even collapsed altogether after the fall of the Han dynasty (around 220 CE), it remained the norm and the basic pattern of governing in late medieval China.



Mandarin

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mandarins_LCCN2011660129.jpg

15.1.1 The Scope of Chinese Empire

The contradiction between its universalist self-image, and the actual territorial confines of its administrative power was one of the reason for tension in the Chinese Empire. Since it was the renowned power in East Asia, and was separated by formidable mountains, desert wasteland and seas from any other power, it was natural that the Chinese considered their Empire to be inclusive of "all under Heaven" (*Tian Xia*). The Chinese Emperor was seen not just as the ruler of those provinces directly governed by him, but as a benevolent authority governing peoples far and near. This image of the Emperor was further strengthened by tribute system, in which representativesfrom different non-Chinese states arrived more or less regularly at the Imperial court to pay their respects to the Emperor bearing gifts that were considered a form of tribute.

The Chinese Emperor directly ruled over 18 provinces by means of a bureaucracy. Regions around the bordergoverned themselves according to their own systems, and were generally left to themselves provided that they did not pose a threat to or openly challenge the authority of the Chinese Emperor. Sometimes in anticipation, the political and military power of the Chinese Empire was extended into these regions. At other times, the rulers of these regions took advantage of conditions of crisis or decay in China proper, and who invaded the Chinese Empire either fully or partly. However, the most successful of these invasions, like the conquests of Mongols and Manchus, did not result in thedisintegration of the Chinese Empire, but only in its continuation in almost the same form under the new Emperor.

15.1.2 The Emperor

The fundamental function and responsibility of the ChineseEmperor was the maintenance ofpolitical, social and natural order. In the first sense, the Emperor was the supreme civil and military head. He was not a figurehead but the actual head of the government. He directly appointed all officials and they were directly accountable to him. The Emperor inflicted severe punishments on those officials who fell out of favour with him. He personally handled all the documents and proposals put before him on all matters associated with government, and to take decisions on those. The Emperor was the supreme lawgiver and the final court of appeal in all cases. He was also the commander of the armed forces.Mainly from the 11th century onwards, the Emperors ensured that military power was highly centralised and no regional warlords were allowed to emerge. The Emperor was also the cultural head of his people. He played a significant role as the patron of art and learning.

Due to these reasons, the political system in China has been considered as a despotism or autocracy. However, there were some limitations on the arbitrariness of an Emperor. The Emperor could not act contrary to the precedent set by the previousEmperors, particularly those of his own dynasty. Besides this, the higher officials criticized anEmperor who wander away from the accepted norms, and the Emperors were expected to respect their words or at least allow them to speak without punishing them. There was even a specific group of officials called as the censors whose job was to criticise the Emperor when they thought it required.

The cosmological role attributed to the Emperor also limited his freedom of action. The Emperor was regardedas an intermediary between earth and Heaven. Natural calamities were interpreted as warnings that all was not well on earth and that the Emperor was failing in his duties. Many times, natural disasters coincided with social and political turbulence, resulting in general belief that the Emperor had lost the Mandategiven to him by Heaven to rule and that his subjects were justified in rebelling against him. Anyone who occupied the Imperial throne was considered to be the Son of Heaven and he enjoyed Heaven's Mandate. All Emperors and ruling houses were thus aware of the temporariness of their position, and the theory of the Mandate of Heaven was often skilfully manipulated by their advisors and officials to get an Emperor to adopt a particular strategy or to amend his ways.

15.1.3 The Bureaucracy

China was subjected to warfare, internal insurgence, foreign invasions, and changes of the ruling dynasty, throughout its long history. In spite of this there was unusual stability in its unified Imperial state and institutions.Undoubtedly, a significant factor was the tradition of rule by an established, centrally-directed bureaucracy, whichendured even the most violent uprisings.

In China, the bureaucracydeveloped its own characteristic method and style of functioning. It had its own elaborate set of rules which governed recruitment, promotion, transfer and even appearance and conduct. Individually, a bureaucrat could be treated most arbitrarily by his Emperor and even be executed. But collectively, the Imperial bureaucracy survived even the most dictatorialEmperors, and no Emperor could rule without their knowledge in managing the affairs of a vast country like China.

Indeed, the bureaucrats were experts but were not technocrats with specialised knowledge of certain subjects. They held importantpositions in the administration.The Chinese civil administration was divided into the central and the provincial administration. In the central administration, the highest officials were those who directly dealt with the Emperor– the officials of the Grand Secretariat, and later, of the Grand Council. The routine affairs of the state was divided between the Six Boards, concerned with civil appointments, revenue, rites, war, punishments and public works. In the provincial administration there were governors, below whom were the officials in charge of circuits, prefectures and districts.

The method of recruitment of bureaucracy was certainly the most characteristic feature of the Chinese bureaucracy as compared to other late medieval bureaucracies. From the 11thcentury onwards, the majority of officials were recruited by means of a series of tough examinations that tested the mastery of Confucian scholarship of the candidates. All the males were eligible to appear in examinations, irrespective of their background. The conduct of examinations was fair with the identityof the candidate was not disclosed to the examiner. Success in these examinations conferred such immense social prestige on the candidate, besides making him eligible for office, that the entire educated class considered success at the examinations their highest aspiration. Since only the talented, meritorious and competent candidates succeeded in passing the examinations, the government of Imperial China has sometimes been called a meritocracy. However, the examinations tested only the mastery of the Confucian scholarship and the literary style of the candidates.

Similarly as the Emperorrequired the services of his officials in order to rule, the bureaucracy needed the Emperor to initiate and preside over the examination system that legitimised their position. However, there were tensions between the Emperor and his bureaucrats. Emperors always sought to control the bureaucrats and curbed their power. The officials were prevented from serving in his own district and from remaining at one post for more than three years.Besides this, the Emperors used spies or eunuchs, to evade regular official channels. However, the Emperor and bureaucracy worked closely together which resulted in stability and longevity of the Imperial Chinese state. The prestige of the bureaucracy also aided the establishment of the tradition of civilian rule as being preferable to military rule in China. Simultaneously, the bureaucratic rule was innately conservative. While officials were trained to be careful in discharging their duties, novelty was generallydiscouraged, and most officials followed rules. This functioned well, but had serious implications for the bureaucracy's ability to function when confronted with unprecedented crisis or challenges.

15.2 Society

Initially, the Chinese society was an agrarian society. Later on, a ruling elite emerged known as the gentry, which was characterized by a combination of landownership, education and government service. Family or household rather than the individual was the fundamental unit of the Chinese society.

15.2.1 Agrarian Society

To begin with, the Chinese civilization arose on the basis of settled agricultural communities in the North China plain. Chinese society consisted mostly of peasantswhowere freeholders who used to pay taxes directly to the state. However, with the passage of time the burdens of paying taxes, dealing with greedy government agents, make a living out of small plots of land resulted in increasing numbers of peasants to become rent-payingtenants on the lands of big landowners. They were exploited a lot, with rents in some regions amounting to 50% of the harvest. Besides, a weak government at the centre meant even reduced check on the coercion of landlords and local officials. It also resulted in the ruin of dykes, dams and irrigation and drainage systems which were necessary to withstand agriculture in the conditions of China, resulting in floods, drought and other disasters. This would in turn result in mass abandonment of lands by peasants, a rise in lawlessness and the propagation of secret societies – a distinctive feature of Chinese society. Secret societies generallystarted as mutual support associations among poor or displaced villagers, which were driven underground by state oppression. However, during social unrest, these secret societies had the ability to transform themselves into nuclei of major rebel movements that sometimes even succeeded in collapsing the ruling dynasty.

China underwent deep economic transformation within the basic framework of the agrarian economy in the period from about the 11thto the 13thcentury CE. Rapidly expanding trade resulted in growing specialisation and commercialisation of agriculture, the extensive use of paper money and sophisticated instruments of credit, and the rise of big merchant families, some of them amassing tremendous wealth. However, merchants were never conferred a high social status. Most successful merchant families invested their profits in attaining land or in striving to obtain official appointments

for themselves or their sons, as a means of securing what they had. Nonetheless, the growth of commerce led to the proliferation of towns and cities, the spread of literacy and the development of a typically urban culture which made Chinese society of the later Imperial era a contrasting from that of earlier times.

15.2.2 Gentry-Dominated Society

In China,the 11thcentury also proved to be a turning point in terms of the composition of the ruling class. Prior to that, the ruling class was a type of aristocracy which owed its dominant position due to high birth rate, control over vast landed estates and military power. The fifty years of civil war that occurred in China after the collapse of the Tang dynasty in the 10thcentury, wiped out most of the great aristocratic families and broke up large landed estates. Thereafter, the Emperors guaranteed that military power was firmly centralised in their own hands. The only opportunity to enjoy political power was to enter the service of the Emperor. It could be accomplished only by acquiring an education in Confucian scholarship that emphasized the qualities of loyalty and obedience to one's superior, and then passing the Imperial examinations.

A class that emerged thereafter has been called as the **gentry**. It was distinguished by a combination of landownership, education and government service. The ownership of land was vitalfor meeting the expenses of the education of the sons of the family. Afterwards, a combination of land and commerce gradually became the basis of the wealth of gentry families. As a consequence of the refinement acquired by means of education, the members of gentry distinguished themselves socially and culturally from the rest of the population, and were entitledto various privileges. Within the class of gentry, the elite group consisted of afew individuals who actually held Imperial office. Access to high office, empowered a gentry member to protect his family members and his lands from the exactions of the state, and to acquire more wealth. Thus, gentry families tended to strengthen themselves, although the status of gentry member was open to any malewho succeeded in passing the examinations. Social mobility, which is considered as a distinctive feature of late medieval Chinese society, echoed the ideal rather than the reality.

The Imperial political power was reinforced by the gentry-dominated social structure in many different ways. Firstly, at the local levela number of functions of governing and maintaining order were accomplished informally by gentry members who did not actually hold office. It comprised things such asconstruction and maintenance of dams, bridges, roads, granaries and other public works, running charitable institutions like orphanages, schools and rest houses, arbitrating disputes among the local population, acting as intermediaries between the people and the district level administration, and even arranging militia and irregular armed forces in troubled times. This ensured that a basic type of administration carried on even during the times of political turmoil. Secondly, the gentry provided the local know-how that the district magistrate (who was always an outsider and who stayed in office for a short span of time) could not have. They functioned as the "eyes and ears" of the Emperor. Thirdly, since their status rested on the regular conduct of examinations, the gentry developed a vested interest in the maintenance of the Imperial government. The founding Emperor of the Ming dynasty in the 14thcentury, while reviewing the grand parade of newly successful

examination candidates at Court, remarked happily, "All the most talented men of the Empire are in my bag!" Thus, even when a ruling house was toppled, provided that new ruling dynasty carried on with the same patterns of government as their predecessors, and held examinations as per the schedule, they were assured of supportfrom the gentry.

15.2.3 Family and Clan

Family or household rather than the individual was thefundamental unit of Chinese society. This was, therefore, even in the tax registers and government records. In the Chinese society the family was patriarchal. There was a strict hierarchy of relationships. Obedience to one's parents, was one of the basic social virtues. This was further strengthened by the practice of worshipping one's ancestors, a very important custom in China.

The average size of a Chinese family was not big, particularly among the peasantry. However, the ideal of the big joint family, headed over by the family patriarch and with all the sons and their families living together, was cherished and implemented where it waspossible particularly among the upper class. Kinship links were enthusiastically maintainedeven where all members did not live jointly. This explained the typically Chinese phenomenon of large clans, comprising of all those who could trace their kinship with each other by the male line. Clans performedcertain functions in the society. The members of the clan jointly observed rituals, managed common property such as burial plots and ancestral halls, took care of the needy, sponsored the education of talented younger males, settled disputes among themselves, maintained genealogies, gave moral-ethical training and education to younger members and enforced discipline. Every so often the clancut across class lines, comprising both rich and poor members, but the existence of clans nonetheless did not alleviate the class divisions in the society all together.

In principle, the Imperial State of China approved of large and well-knit families. The government desired to have families where people were taught the qualities of obedience, loyalty and respect for hierarchy. Families were also expected to keep under control the deviant tendencies among its members, and thus aided the State in maintaining order. In practice, however, the State was also suspicious of powerful clans developing as rival centres of power, and kept an eyeon their activities and behaviour.

15.3 Religion

The historians, sociologists and anthropologists have hotly debated over the issue of the prevalence of religion in late medieval China. On the one hand, Confucianism was definitely the most influential and dominant belief system of the Chinese. It was totally indifferentto questions such as the existence of God or an afterlife. A strong, centrally organised religion or priesthood was lacking in China. On the other hand, no one can deny the fascination of Chinese with the supernatural, or the proliferation of gods, goddesses and spirits who were venerated with great devoutness in temples and shrines. The Chinese had both a deep moral/ethical tradition, as well as a rich tradition of religious worship. However, their most important moral and ethical beliefs did not originate from an organised religion. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were considered as the "three pillars" of Chinese society.

15.3.1 Confucianism

The term Confucianism refers to the Chinese ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE). Confucius lived in an age of turmoil and the breakdown of social and political institutions. Hischief concern was to find a solution to the chaos and to restore order and moral values. The bottom-line of his philosophy was the concept that this was attainable only if truly moral men (or "gentlemen") were to emerge. Such men were not born with the right moral qualities. However, these qualities could be cultivated by means of education and the observance of rites, propriety and proper relationships. The basic relationships in society were considered to be those between parents and child, sovereign and subject, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother–all relationships between superiors and inferiors–and between friends. Confucius emphasized the ultimate importance of certain qualities, likegenerosity, filial piety, loyalty, sincerity, and so on. If the right men were in command of all affairs, Confucius believed, then peace and harmony and virtue China would be restored in the society. Confucius gathered a number of devoted disciplesaround him during his lifetime. However, it is with the adoption of the teachings of Confucius and his school that Confucianism became universal. It moulded the behaviour and thinking of Chinese and strengthened their important institutions in many ways.



Confucious

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Confucius,_fresco_from_a_Western_Han_tomb_of_Dongping_County,_Shandong_province,_China.jpg

Confucianismgave a positive element to the Chinese outlook. The solution to man's problems lay not in escape from earthly life or the renunciation of desires, but in actively cultivating the right qualities and correcting things on this earth. It laid great emphasis on education and public service. It laid stress on the need for order and performance of one's social and public duties. This made it a most suitable philosophy to strengthen the Imperial State. It acknowledged hierarchy in the social order and preached the need for obedience and submission to authority, associating the relationship of a sovereign to his subject with that of parent to child. By emphasizing the concept of rule based on "virtue" or moral authority rather than military power or rules and regulations, it worked to soften the severercharacteristics of Imperial power, and strengthened the custom of civilian rule.

15.3.2 Religious Traditions Related to Confucianism

The concept of God or an afterlife was hardly of any concern for Confucius. However, Confucianism developed a cosmology and metaphysics, some features of which were adopted from ancient religious traditions, and some of which developed later, partly in response to the challenge posed by Buddhism and Taoism.

A notable tradition which came to be accepted as part of the Confucian custom was the practice of ancestor worship, observed by all the Chinese. By adopting different forms of veneration, the memory of ancestors was kept alive. Besides this was the concept of Heaven and of Fate. It was thought that Heaven determined destiny on all issues ranging from affairs of State to the most personal aspects of the life of an individual. However, sinceHeaven, Earth and Man were regarded to be a part of a single trilogy, the men's actions were considered capable of influencing the course imposed on them by Heaven. The practice of divination was another aspect of the Chinese religious tradition. The principle of Yin and Yang, or the unity of negative and positive elements, and of the Five Elements, were also part of the Confucian belief system. This principle states that all things exist as inseparable and contradictory opposites. For example, male-female, light-dark and young-old. The pairs of equal and opposites attract and complement each other. Later on, the rise of neo-Confucianism, or the rejuvenated version of Confucianism after its temporary eclipse by Buddhism, led to the assimilation of certain other concepts of a metaphysical nature into the doctrine. This comprised the concept that all thingsderived from a single source calledas the Supreme Ultimate, and consisted of both li and qi, loosely defined as 'principle' and 'matter'.From a metaphysical viewpoint, li is the world's order, or pattern which governs the cosmic process, while qi functions as the energetic stuff that it materializes.

15.3.3 Taoism and Buddhism

The great variety of gods, goddesses and spirits in the Chinese religion, owed its origins not to Confucianism but to the impact of Taoism and of Buddhism of the Mahayana variety. Taoism began almost in the same era that Confucius lived, as asimple mystical philosophy propagated by its founder, Lao Zi. In contrast with Confucianism, Taoism was not concerned with the affairs of society or the State or moral values, but with nature, spontaneity and a fanciful attitude towards life. However, Taoism took on a variety of elements, as it evolvedcomprising a pantheon of gods and a group of priests which helped it to spread among the masses, though it never became an organised

religion like Buddhism. It had a deepimpact on Chinese poetry and painting, with their lyrical quality and recurrent theme of man-in-Nature. Among the scholarofficial class, it offered a type of philosophical retreat from the rigidity along with the endless cares and responsibilities of social and public life. It was often said that a scholar-official was a Confucian when in office, and a Taoist when out of office.

In China, Buddhism was absorbed gradually into after its first introduction from India in 1st century CE. Itattained its peak between 5th and 8th centuries CE, when the Chinese rulers granted it patronage, and the Buddhist *sangha* became very powerful. Both Buddhism and Taoism progressed precisely during the time when the Imperial system was in deep crisis and when Confucianism, as the ideology of the Imperial system became less reliable. Particularly, Mahayana Buddhism, with its deep philosophy about the nature of suffering in this world, and its inspiring concept of compassion and salvation for mankind by means of sacrifice, filled a philosophical and spiritual need of the Chinese in this period in a manner that Confucianism was not able to accomplish. During the period of political chaos and mass displacement that followed the disintegration of the Han dynasty, the Buddhist *sangha* that extended beyond the limitations of the family and the State provided a vital form of social integration. Even thoughthe influence of Buddhismdiminished with the revival of the Imperial system and Confucianism particularly after the 10th century, it never ceased to exist altogether. In its place, it continued to exert the liveliest influence on popular religious life. Together with popular Taoism, it also satisfied another significant role in Chinese society, as the ideology of a number of important rebel movements.

15.3.4 General Characters of Religion in China

Religion in China was very heterogeneous. In other words, as it was practised by the people, the varied religious traditions were not regarded as mutually exclusive. One could adopt Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism without identifying himself with one only. This allowed different traditions to remain in the background, but not disappear completely, when another tradition was on the rise. There were no full-fledged religious wars among groups of people. In general, the State tolerated different religious faiths, and persecuted them only when there was a fear that they were becoming rival centres of power or were undermining the established social customs. Persecutions done on the grounds of doctrinal heresy alone were rare. Some instances of persecution of Buddhists usually led to in the closure of the monasteries and their lands, and the return of monks and nuns to lay life, instead ofindiscriminate extermination or reconversion. The moral dimension of Chinese deities was not strong. Gods and goddesses were rather worshipped because of their believed power to help or harm an individual or group.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who were mandarins?
2. What do you understand by Mandate of Heaven?
3. What was the method of recruitment of Chinese bureaucracy?
4. Who was gentry in China?

5. What was the fundamental unit of Chinese society?
6. Name the three pillars of Chinese society.
7. What is Confucianism?
8. What do you understand by Taoism?
9. Explain the principle of Yin and Yang.
10. Which sect of Buddhism gained popularity in late medieval China?

15.4 Summary

- China was a vast country of great diversity, and it is difficult to make generalisations about its traditions and institutions.
- These were in no way stagnant, and evolved significantly over the course of her long history.
- The social and political order of late medieval China was one of the most stable and most highly organised in the world.
- Late medieval China has been characterised in a number of different ways. It has been called as "oriental despotism", or a "bureaucratic society". It has also been termed as a "gentry society" or a "Confucian society".
- Perhaps the most noteworthy product of traditional Chinese civilization was the Imperial State governed by the Emperor and highly structured bureaucracy known as mandarins.
- The contradiction between its universalist self-image, and the actual territorial confines of its administrative power was one of the reason for tension in the Chinese Empire.
- The fundamental function and responsibility of the Chinese Emperor was the maintenance of political, social and natural order.
- Political system in China has been considered as a despotism or autocracy. However, there were some limitations on the arbitrariness of an Emperor.
- There was unusual stability in China's unified Imperial state and institutions. An important factor was the tradition of rule by an established, centrally-directed bureaucracy, which endured even the most violent uprisings.
- The method of recruitment of bureaucracy by means of examinations was certainly the most characteristic feature of the Chinese bureaucracy.
- Initially, the Chinese society was an agrarian society. China underwent deep economic transformation within the basic framework of the agrarian economy in the period from about the 11^{th} to the 13^{th} century CE.
- Later on, a ruling elite emerged known as the gentry, which was characterized by a combination of landownership, education and government service.
- Family or household rather than the individual was the fundamental unit of the Chinese society.
- Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were considered as the "three pillars" of Chinese society.

- Confucianism refers to the Chinese ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE).
- Taoism began almost in the same era that Confucius lived, as a simple mystical philosophy propagated by its founder, Lao Zi. It was concerned with nature, spontaneity and a fanciful attitude towards life.
- In China, Buddhism was introduced in 1st century CE. It attained its peak between 5th and 8th centuries CE, when the Chinese rulers granted it patronage, and the Buddhist *sangha* became very powerful.

15.5 Glossary

- **Dyke:** A long thick wall constructed to prevent the sea or a river from flooding low land.
- **Filial:** Related with the relationship between children and their parents
- **Formidable:** Causing fear, apprehension, or dread.
- ***Sangha*:**The Buddhist monastic order, including monks, nuns, and novices.
- **Turbulence:** The quality or state of being turbulent; violent disorder or commotion.

15.6 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Mandarins were important public officials & bureaucrats, playing a vital role in the country's imperial history.
2. The Mandate of Heaven is a Chinese political philosophy that was used in ancient and imperial China to justify the rule of the King or Emperor of China.
3. By means of a series of tough examinations that tested the mastery of Confucian scholarship of the candidates.
4. The "gentry", or "landed gentry" in China was the elite who held privileged status through passing the Imperial exams, which made them eligible to hold office.
5. Family
6. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism
7. The term Confucianism refers to the Chinese ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE).
8. Taoism is a Chinese religious philosophy which believes that people should lead a simple honest life and not interfere with the course of natural events.
9. This principle states that all things exist as inseparable and contradictory opposites. For example, male-female, light-dark and young-old. The pairs of equal and opposites attract and complement each other.
10. Mahayana sect.

15.7 Suggested Readings

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15.8 Terminal Questions

1. Can the emperor be considered as an autocratic head of the Chinese State?
2. How the bureaucracy in China was unique? What role did it play in running the state?
3. Discuss in detail the Chinese society in the late medieval times.
4. Describe the religion in China during the late medieval times.
5. Can Confucianism be treated as a religion?
6. Write short notes on
   (i) Family and Clan in China
   (ii) Spread of Buddhism in China
   (iii) Taoism



UNIT-IV

CHAPTER-16

POPULATION AND AGRICULTURE IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Structure:

16.0 Introduction

The role of populations and changes within them have led to change in various aspects of human life. They are not merely passive statistical data. The variations in the population of any societyhave led to changes in family structure, marriage and social interaction patterns on the one hand, while they have also forced large-scale changes at macro-levels to announce transition from the medieval to the modern, like in Europe.

No sphere of activity was more important to life in medieval Europe than agriculture. All through the Middle Ages the overwhelming majority of the population was dependent on the land. The demographic expansion of the 11thcentury and the rise of urban centres would have not been possible without an increasing agricultural production.

The Middle Ages in Europe was a crucial period in its urbanization. The propagation of urban life, especially from 1000 CE to 1300 CE, moulded the European landscape, physically, economically, and demographically, as population levels increased and a growing commercialization affected all facets of culture and society. The formation of towns took placeat the same time with the expansion of earlier-established urban centres to forge a new map of urban Europe by 1300 CE. Simultaneously, the fortunes of some towns and cities grew, while others decreased, and some disappeared altogether or became villages.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Know about the population trends in Europe in the Middle Ages,

- Learn about the volume and the nature of agricultural production in medieval Europe,
- Understand the emergence of towns and the urbanization of the medieval European society.

16.1 Population in Europe

In Europe, the Early Middle Ages witnessed relatively little population growth with urbanization well below its Roman peak.It reflects a low level of technology, restricted trade and political, social and economic displacementaggravateddue to the expansion of Viking in the north, Arabs in the south and the movement of Slavs and Bulgarians, and later on the Magyars in the east. This type of rural, uncertain life encouraged the development of feudalism and the Christianization of Europe. During the time of Charlemagne population in Europe is estimated to be between 25 and 30 million, of which probably half were in the Carolingian Empire that comprised modern France, the Low Countries, western Germany, Austria, Slovenia, northern Italy and part of northern Spain. A majority of medieval settlements continued to be small, with agricultural land and large zones of unpopulated and lawless rough country in between.

There was expansion of agriculture from the 10thto 13thcenturies, into the wilderness, in what has been termed the "*great clearances*". Many forests and marshes were cleared and cultivated during the High Middle Ages.Simultaneously, during the Ostsiedlung, Germans resettled in regions earlier only thinly populated by Polabian Slavs. Crusaders expanded to the Crusader states, portions of the Iberian Peninsula were reconquered from the Moors, and the Normans colonized England and southern Italy. These movements and conquests are part of a larger pattern of expansion of population and resettlement that took place in Europe at this time.

Several reasons may be attributed for this expansion and colonization. They comprise an improving climate known as the '*Medieval warm period*', which led to longer and more productive growing seasons; the stoppage of the raids by Vikings, Arabs, and Magyars, leading to greater political stability; progress in medieval technology allowing more land to be cultivated; reforms of the Church in the 11th century that further increased social stability; and the rise of feudalism, which also brought about of social stability. There was a revival of towns and trade, and the rise of a money economy began to weaken the serfdom. Initially, land was plentiful and labour required to work on land was scarce. The feudal lords devised new ways to attract and keep labour. The urban centres managed to attract serfs by ensuring them freedom. Population increased as the new regions were settled, both internally and externally. Overall, the population of Europe is estimated to have touched 75 million.

- **England**–In 1086 CE, the population of England was around 1.5 million or more. It is estimated to have grown to somewhere between 3.7 million and 5–7 million,although the 14thcentury estimates derive from sources after the first plague epidemics, and the estimates for population before the coming of plague depends on assumed plague mortality, the proportion of children and the rate of omissions in returns of taxable population.
- **Italy**–Around 1300 CE, Italy's population around 1300 has been estimated between 10 and 13 million.

- **France**–In 1328 CE, the population of France was between 13.4 million and 18 to 20 million people (in the present-day area), the latter not reached again until the early modern period.
- **Kievan Rus**-The population of Kievan Rus is estimated to be between 4.5 million and 8 million.

By the 14th century, there was no more expansion of the frontiers of settled cultivation and internal colonization was culminating.The population levels, however, remained high. Then a sequence of events often called the *Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*, collectively killed millions of people. Starting with the Great Famine in 1315 CE and the Black Death from 1348 CE, the population of Europe showed a sudden decline. Europe suffered heaviest loses in the period between 1348 and 1420 CE.About 40% of the named inhabitants disappeared in parts of Germany. In Provence, the population was allegedly halved and in some parts of Tuscany, 70% were lost in this duration.

Historians have not been able to offer a convincing explanationfor the causes of death of so many people. Some historians have questioned the established theory that the decline in population was only due to infectious disease and so they have taken into account other social factors.

Based on the theory of Malthus, an argument has been forwarded that Europe was overpopulated.It was barely able to feed its population even in good times. In the 14th century grain yields were between 2:1 and 7:1 (2:1 means for every seed planted, 2 are harvested. As a result malnutrition developed gradually, lowering immunity, and competition for resources led to wars, and then finally crop yields decreased asa result of Little Ice Age.

Another theory has been propagated is that competition for resources worsened the imbalance between property-owners and workersand that the money supply ceased to correspond with increased economic activity due to which wages sank while rents rose, leading to demographic stagnation. The economic conditions of the poor also exacerbated the calamities of the plague as they had no alternative, such as fleeing to a villa in the country in the manner of the nobles in the *Decameron*. Since the poor resided in crowded areas, they could not isolate the diseased. They had weaker immunities from a poor diet, difficult living and working conditions and poor sanitation. After the plague and other causes of decline of population lowered the labor supply, there was increase in wages. This increased the mobility of labor and resulted in redistribution of wealth, although property-ownerstried to resist change through wage freezes and price controls. It contributed to popular uprisings like the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 CE. By 1450 CE, the total population of Europe was markedly below that of 150 years earlier, but overall all classes had a higher standard of living.

During the Middle Ages, the population of Europe can be summarized as under:

- 400–600 CE (Late Antiquity): Decline in population
- 600–1000 CE (Early Middle Ages): Stable at a low level, with erratic growth.
- 1000–1250 CE (High Middle Ages): Population boom and expansion.
- 1250–1348 CE (Late Middle Ages): Stable or intermittently rising at a high level, with decline in 1315–17 CE in England.

- 1348–1420 CE (Late Middle Ages): Steep decline in England and France, growth in East Central Europe.
- 1420–1470 CE (Late Middle Ages): Stable or intermittently falling to a low level in Western Europe, growth in East Central Europe.
- After 1470 CE: Slow expansion gaining momentum in the early 16th century.

The Brenner Debate

In a paper published by Robert Brenner in 1976 CE, yet another theory was proposed regarding the limited population growth in the High Middle Ages. He argues that feudal lords and landlords controlled most of Europe's land; they could charge high enough rents or demand a hefty percentage of peasants' profit due to which peasants on these lands were forced to survive at subsistence levels. The peasants did not possessadequate capital to invest in their farms.

Besides, the small size of most of the farms of peasantsrestricted centralized and more efficient cultivation of land on larger fields. In regions of Europe where primogeniture was less widely practiced, peasant lands were segmented and re-subdivided with each generation of heirs.As a result peasant's income was naturally reduced. There was not enough surplus available for potential investment in agriculture, and there was not enough hope of innovation in agriculture.

Consequently, the size of European population was restricted on account of the social and economic systemand the prevalent agricultural system and technology could not support enough population. When the population of Europe exceeded the threshold that the existing economic structure allowed, it could result in loss of population loss, social instability, and famine. Only by modifying the prevalent social structure of land ownership and distribution could Europe's population surpass early levels of 14th century.

16.2 Volume and Nature of Agricultural Production

In medieval Europe agriculturedescribes the farming practices, crops, technology, and agricultural society and economy of Europe from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE to 1500 CE.

Three events set the stage. First was the fall of the Western Roman Empire which began to lose territory to barbarian invaders around 400 CE. Second was an era of global cooling due to volcanic eruptions which started in 536 CE and ended in about 660 CE. Third, was the Justinian Plague which started in 541 CE, and recurred periodically until 750 CE. It resulted in the death of up to a quarter of the European population. The impact of climatic cooling and the plague led to reduced agricultural production.



Agriculture in Middle Ages

Source:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture_in_the_Middle_Ages

As a result of these factors the population of Europe was considerably less in 600 CE than it had been in 500 CE. The popular view is that the fall of the Western Roman Empire resulted in a "dark age" in Western Europe, however, the lot of the farmers who made up to 80 percent or more of the total population, may have improved. The fall of Rome resulted in reduction in tax burdens, weakening of the aristocracy, and consequently greater freedom for peasants.

The agricultural history of the Eastern Roman Empire differed from that of Western Europe early in the Middle Ages. In the5th and 6th centuries there was expansion of market-oriented and industrial farming. The Iberian Peninsula had a different experience than eastern and western Europe. There was abandonment of farmland and reforestation due to depopulation, but there are also evidences of expanded grazing and market-oriented livestock raising of horses, mules, and donkeys.

The Arab Muslim rulers introduced many new crops such as sugar cane, rice, hard wheat (durum), citrus, cotton, and figs and new agricultural technology into the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). These crops required sophisticated methods of irrigation, water management, and agricultural technologies.

In medieval Europe, crop yields were very little, although probably not inferior to those in much of the Roman Empire preceding the Middle Ages and the early modern period following the Middle Ages. The most common method of calculating yield was the number of seeds harvested compared to the total number of seeds planted. For example, in Sussex (England), in several manors, the average yield for the years 1350–1399 CE was 4.34 seeds produced for each seed sown for wheat, 4.01 for barley, and 2.87 for oats.Average yields of grain crops in England from 1250 to 1450 CE were 7 to 15 bushels per acre. Poor years, however, might see yields drop to less than 4 bushels per acre. The yields in England were probably characteristics for Europe in the Middle Ages.

Medieval agriculture has been criticized by the scholars for its inefficiency and low productivity. They blamedthe stagnation of established system. Two alleged inefficiencies of the mainly open-field system were the communal management of land which was responsible for less than optimal allocation of resources and the fact that farmers had small, scattered strips of land to cultivate. The "*Postan Thesis*" is also cited as a factor in the low productivity of medieval agriculture. It states that medieval agriculture had low productivity because there were inadequate pasture for farm animals and thus, shortage of nitrogen-rich manure to keep the arable land fertile. Moreover, as a result of population growth after 1000 CE, marginal lands, pasture, and woodlands were converted into arable lands which further led to reduction in the number of farm animals and manure quantity.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, we find the earliest evidence of progress in increasing productivity from the Low Countries of the Netherlands and Belgium, and Flanders in northern France. Fallow land was almost eliminated there by planting cover crops such as vetch, beans, turnips, and broom and high-value crops like rapeseed, madder and hops. In contrast to the extensive agriculture of earlier times, this new technique involved intensive cultivation of small plots of land.

The low agricultural production in medieval timescontinued in Russia and some other areas until the 19thcentury. In 1850 CE, the average yield for grain in Russia was 600 kilograms per hectare, which was less than one half the yield in England and the Low Countries at that time.

In medieval Europe, famines caused due to crop failures and poor crop years were always a danger. It was often not possible to get rid of famine in one region by importing grain from another region as the price of grains doubled every 50 miles due to difficulty of overland transportation.

According to a study,on an average famines in Europe occurred every 20 years between the years 750 and 950 CE. Extreme weather and climatic anomalies were the principal causes. Warfare was not found to be a major cause of famine. A study of crop failures in Winchester, England from 1232 to 1349 CErevealed that harvest failure occurred an average of every 12 years for wheat and every 8 years for oats and barley.

Apparently, warfare was responsible for a major famine in Hungary from 1243 to 1245 CE. These were the years thatfollowed the Mongol invasion and widespread destruction. It is estimated that 20 to 25 percent of the population of Hungary was wiped out due to war and hunger.

The Great Famine of 1315–1317 CE is the best known and most extensive famine of the Middle Ages was that affected 30 million people in northern Europe, of whom 5 to 10 percent died.Crop yields fell by one-third or one-fourth and draft animals died in large numbers.

In the Middle Ages, the most important technical innovation for agriculture was the widespread adoption around 1000 CE of the mouldboard and heavy ploughs. These ploughsmade it possible for medieval farmers to exploit the fertile but heavy clay soils of northern Europe. These ploughs turned the soil over which facilitated the control of weeds and their incorporation into the soil, increasing fertility. Mouldboard ploughing also created the familiar ridge and furrow pattern of medieval fields which enabled drainage of excess moisture.

These technological innovations and the additional agricultural production they stimulated led to a large increase in European population from 1000 to 1300 CE, an increase that was reversed by the Great Famine and the Black Death of the 14thcentury.

16.3 Towns and the Urbanization of Medieval Society

Over the ages urbanisation and the towns have been linked and identified with the development of civilisation and recognised as centres of cultural activities. In almost all the societies we have stories and tales about their towns having great splendour, wealth, grand palaces, aristocratic life, centres of intellectual life, abode of great literary geniuses and strongholds of people from different races and cultural background. Many societies were known by their impressive towns rather than other characteristics. All parts of the world experienced a rapid phase of urbanisation and proliferation of towns in the medieval period. They had their own dynamism and representedthe progress of different societies towards development, as well as the lands of opportunities for those with skills and talent. For peasants and serfs burdened by rural suppression, towns were a silver lining for cutting their feudal ties, a land of opportunity for social and economic success, where they could hope to attain their due share of wealth.The process of urbanization and the growth of towns and cities is to be seen in the standpoint of growth of civilisations and in the medieval period as the centres and instruments of transition to modern period.

16.3.1 Pre-industrial Towns

Over thehistory townssignified a different economic, political, social and cultural atmosphere than the rural areas. Many features gave pre-industrial towns of Europe a distinct identity. Towns of Western Europe were based on capitalism with the ability to act as the solvent of feudal social relations. Thus, in the west capitalism and towns were basically similar. The European towns developed as autonomous world according to their own propensities. According to HenriPirenne's studies of medieval towns and commerce, the closing of the Mediterranean trade routes was important to the substitution of an agrarian economy from the 7th to 9thcenturies. Each demesne was a closed domestic economy of no markets. They did not sell, because the markets were wanting. The reopening of long distance trade from the 11thcentury, the counter-attack of Christianity against Islam-revived towns and markets broke down the rigid confines of demesnial system.

There was an economic and political freedom in different degrees in different towns. The impact of their presence as business centres, especially on the small estates of knights, was a profound one. This gave a push to the money economy. The exploitative rural demands by the lords compelled the rural population to migrate to towns. There were rarely more than 20,000 inhabitants in the town; and in the 14thcentury cities as large as 40,000-50,000 habitants were only found in Italy and Flanders. New York only had 11,000 and Bristol had 9,500 inhabitants. Even in the 15thcentury Hamburg had 22000, Nuremberg 20,000-25000, Ulam 20,000 and Augsburg 18,000 inhabitants. Initially, the urban craftsmen, merchants and small traders had dependence on feudal economy.

In Europe, the medieval towns were enclosed by walls with ramparts. The need for wall was to define the boundaries of the town and provide protection. Many gates were built at places to provide access to the city and regulate the entry of the visitors.The administration placed the gates under the guards. According to Braudel, there were three types of towns in the west—open towns, which were not differentiated from their hinterland; closed towns and the towns held in subjection.



Town in Medieval Europe

Source:https://home.uchicago.edu/~rfulton/towns.htm

In several cases different parts of the town were distinguished into areas for residential purpose, market, government offices and courts etc. The plans of the towns were not apparently markedand growth was unplanned for most of the early European cities. In all large towns the over-crowding resulted in narrow streets, small dwellings and constantly widening boundaries. The centre of the city was the hub of activities for various business and official establishments. The producers and craftsmen resided at the periphery of the towns.

The town and countryside had a reciprocal relationship. The town was always dependent on the countryside for its food supply. It could have a choice to long-distance trade only in exceptional circumstances and only if it was a privileged city like Florence, Venice, Naples and Rome.Up to the 18th century,a number of big towns had their share of rural activities. Shepherds, gamekeepers, agricultural workers and vine-growers resided even in Paris. Many small towns of Europe were the same as the big villages. They had some features of the countryside. Therefore, they were known as *rural towns*. During the season of harvest many inhabitants of the town left their residence for harvesting.

16.3.2 Beginnings of Urban Society and Economy

There was a revival of urbanism in most of the regions of Europe in the medieval period. The proliferation of urban centres is most remarkable in Europe and Asia. The most importantfeature of medieval towns is the continuity of the settlements at particular sites and their gradual increase in the number of inhabitants, the area of its spread, the craft production and commercial activities. The medieval towns played a significant role in the transition of medieval societies into the modern world. In Europe the towns heralded the industrial revolution and became centres of communication network.

The emergence of towns in the later medieval Europe is topic of debate among the historians.A few historians suggests that medieval towns were survivals of older Roman cities. It cannot be denied that some larger towns maintained continuity of institutions throughout the period of nomadic destructions. But this theory of continuity seems to be inadequate because most of the Roman towns had disappeared in the Dark Ages and the institutions and the Roman style became obsolete in the early medieval age.

It is generally held that in the Western Europe the growth of trade and markets led to the development of such forces which weakened and displaced feudalism. The process can be identified with the upsurge of towns between 11th to 14thcenturies. Since the rise of urban centres was associated with the decline of feudalism in Europe, a few historians argue that the towns of this period had a purely rural origin. According to this argument, the towns developed within the feudal structure, its inhabitants retained some relationships of dependence to an overlord,and qualification for citizenship remained basically agricultural. It was only at the later stage that the trade became main occupation of the inhabitants. Fortification of the palace with a wall for protection of the inhabitants was the only dividing line between earlier village and later town.

A different argument was forwarded by Henri Pirenne for the origin of medieval towns. He asserted that towns originated in settlements of merchants' caravans. Initially, the traders

were wandering peddlers travelling between the different fairs or from one feudal household to another often in caravans for mutual protection. They selected the site of an old Roman town for settlement, due to its favourable situation at the junction of Roman roads, or they might choose the protecting walls of some feudal castles. These type of settlements were also being protected by the kings and knights on some payment of money.

Some towns of England originated on a passage or near the estuary of a river which caused them to become centres of trade. Manchester developed from a village and was consistently agricultural and non-commercial in nature for some time even after it became a borough. Cambridge developed from a group of villages and was located near older castle and camp. However, its position on a ford was responsible for its later growth. Similar was the case with Oxford.

Pirenne also provides another explanation for the survival of towns after their decline between the $8^{th}$and the 10^{th}centuries. He believes that the main factor was the revival of maritime commerce in the Mediterranean, with its consequent stimulus to the movement of transcontinental trading caravans, and in turn to local settlements of traders. The Islamic invasions earlier interrupted the maritime trade. However, in the 11^{th} century the old trade route was opened with the east. The 11^{th} and 12^{th} centuriesCrusades created favourable conditions for the growth of trade and commerce in the Mediterranean Sea.

The task of finding out the extent of urbanisation or calculating the ratio of urban inhabitants in the total population of medieval period is a difficult one. The size of the town is another important point which lacks any consensus. It is not easy to fix a minimum limit to the number of inhabitants to classify a habitat as a town or city. Both these issues have been the topic of debate among the historians.

References are available of towns in Europe whose population estimates vary from a few hundred to couple of hundred thousand. In France, a minimum population of 2000 was required for a place to be counted as a town. While in England a population of 5000 was more acceptable. According to Braudel,around 13% population lived in towns in England in 1700 CE, if 5000 is taken as minimum definition, 16% in 1750 CE and 25% in 1801 CE.

There was a remarkable growth of towns in Europe.We have population estimates of more than fifty towns in 16^{th}-17^{th}centuries which had a population of more than 40000 inhabitants. Around 12 towns out of these had a population of more than a hundred thousand and 3 towns had a population of more than 400 thousand around the end of 17^{th}century. London which had a population of less than 60,000 in early 16^{th} century grew to around 200 thousand around the early 17^{th} century and crossed 400 thousand by the end of the century.

During the medieval period, the rapid urbanisation had a big impact on the administration, economy and society. The changes in these spheres had long term consequences and perhaps paved the way to the transition to the Modern World.

In the towns of medieval Europe, only the rich people had citizen rights. There were two categories of citizens – full citizens and ordinary citizens in Venice. A minimum of 15 years of residence were still required to be eligible to apply for the first, 25 years for the second. The ordinary people in towns were hostile to newcomers. Limited conception of citizenship existed everywhere.

The industry and craft, privileges and profitsbelonged to the town. The guild of merchants could deprive the rural areas of the city of the right to spin, weave and dye.The towns of medieval Europe succeeded in attaining autonomy from the feudal authority after a prolonged struggle between the town communities and feudal lords in 13th and 14thcenturies in Western Europe. The great Peasants' Revolt of 1381 CE in England was actively supported by the urban elements. By means of these struggles, the European towns acquired partial or complete autonomy from the feudal domination.

Merchant communities dominated the large cities of medieval Europe, but there were many older aristocratic families who owned land in the city and its neighbourhood. These characterised an element of feudal society that continued to survive inside the new urban society.

The social inequalities were not very sharp in England before the 14th century. Big traders, merchants, craftsmen and retail traders all were members of Merchant Guild which was an association of urban traders and craftsmen. Among the craftsmen there was hardly any difference between master and journeymen in economic and social terms. However, as the population and the territory of the town increased, the original owners of urban land enriched themselves from sales of lands or from leasers at a high rent.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, there were two fundamental changes in the process of crafts production and trade. First, a specifically trading element, particularly in England, isolated itself from production and formed exclusive trading organisations which monopolised a particular sphere of wholesale trade. Secondly, these new trading organisations came to dominate the town government and to use their political power to subordinate the craftsmen.

Due to increased agricultural production in the rural areas sections of rural population from agriculture could be spared and made available for engaging in craft production in towns. The growing commercial activities triggered the growth of craft production. Now the towns, which were earlier centres of exchange, grew into the centres of production.

In Europe, the guilds strengthened and dominated the urban economy and governance. It was the age of big merchants who were crucial to industrial revolution. In order to meet the growing demand for habitations, business, industry and governance,large scale construction activities were undertaken. They gave a distinct physical character to towns common to almost all parts of Europe.

The towns evolved by a process of economic, social and cultural synthesis and acquired a distinct character. Simultaneously, they also retained some of the social and cultural features of the settlers. The towns attracted people, depending on their size, from a given region, distant places or even different nationalities. In many cases the immigrants brought their folklore, traditions, customs and festivals with them. They established their own communities. However, they adopted a new social life in towns where now instead of clan, the family and household was the anchor of life and new social ties developed.

During this period, the towns emerged as great centres of knowledge replacing monasteries. Many schools and universities were established. According to Giovanni Villani, at

Florence in 1338 CE, there were thousands of boys and girls learning to read and six mathematical schools wherethe students were learning commercial usage before learning practical with a merchant. From 15thcentury, the printing technology made the book universally accessible and brought it within the reach of common people. A new intellectual elite and a new aristocracy came into existence. They were the educated graduates from the universities and were ready to replace nobility of birth. This new educated class combined with scientific development and growth of arts, literature, and new ideas flourished in the new opportunities provided by the towns. Towns completely dominated the social, cultural, economic and political life of the people by the end of medieval period.

The social and politicalsuccess of the urban middle class, and of its peculiar sets of values, had revolutionary consequences. A new Europe was born with the appearance of the medieval towns and the emergence of the urban bourgeoisie. Every aspect of socio-economic life was transformed. The urban revolution of the 11th and 12th centuries was the prelude to, and created necessary conditions for theIndustrial Revolution.

Self-Check Exercise

1. What do understand by the term "*great clearances*" in Europe?
2. Explain *medieval warm period*.
3. What do you mean by *Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*?
4. What do you know about Brenner's debate?
5. What was Poston Thesis?
6. In the 14th and 15th centuries, where do we find the earliest evidence of progress in increasing productivity?
7. Which is the best known and most extensive famine of the Middle Ages?
8. Define rural towns.
9. What was Henri Pirenne argument for the origin of medieval towns?
10. Name any popular town of England that developed from a village.

16.4 Summary

- In Europe, the Early Middle Ages witnessed relatively little population growth with urbanization well below its Roman peak. It reflects a low level of technology, restricted trade and political, social and economic displacement.
- There was expansion of agriculture from the 10th to 13th centuries as many forests and marshes were cleared and cultivated during the High Middle Ages. It resulted in expansion of population and resettlement.
- By the 14th century, there was no more expansion of the frontiers of settled cultivation and internal colonization was culminating. The population levels, however, remained high.
- However, Then a sequence of events often called the *Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*, collectively killed millions of people.

- Historians have not been able to offer a convincing explanation for the causes of death of so many people.
- Some historians have questioned the established theory that the decline in population was only due to infectious disease and so they have taken into account other social factors.
- In medieval Europe, crop yields were very little, although probably not inferior to those in much of the Roman Empire preceding the Middle Ages and the early modern period following the Middle Ages.
- Medieval agriculture has been criticized by the scholars for its inefficiency and low productivity.
- The "*Postan Thesis*" is also cited as a factor in the low productivity of medieval agriculture. It states that medieval agriculture had low productivity because there were inadequate pasture for farm animals and thus, shortage of nitrogen-rich manure to keep the arable land fertile.
- In the 14^{th} and 15^{th} centuries, we find the earliest evidence of progress in increasing productivity from the Low Countries of the Netherlands and Belgium, and Flanders in northern France.
- The low agricultural production in medieval times continued in Russia and some other areas until the 19^{th} century.
- In medieval Europe, famines caused due to crop failures and poor crop years were always a danger.According to a study, on an average famines in Europe occurred every 20 years between the years 750 and 950 CE.
- In the Middle Ages, the most important technical innovation for agriculture was the widespread adoption around 1000 CE of the mouldboard and heavy ploughs which led to increased agricultural production.
- Urbanisation played a significant role not only in Europe but in other parts of medieval world also. The emergence of towns had been important in different societies throughout history.
- However, the urbanisation of the medieval period was quite different than the earlier phases of urbanisation.
- In the medieval period, the urbanization had remarkable continuity in the process of transition to the modern world. It resulted in a number of significant administrative, social and economic institutions.
- During the medieval period number of urban centres increased, their size and population grew at a faster rateparticularly during the 16th and 17th centuries.
- The design of towns with enclosed walls and gates separating them from the countryside are common to both European and Asian townships.
- Culturally urban centres were dissimilar from the surrounding countryside. The European towns enjoyed a higher degree of autonomy in comparison with their Asian counterparts.

- Despite physical separation from the countryside there was a lot of economic and social interaction between the towns and countryside.
- The economy and society represented by towns dominated the societies they were located in. Especially in Europe, they emerged as the main centres which led the way for the transition to modern world.

16.5 Glossary

- **Decameron:** A collection of tales by Giovanni Boccaccio, probably composed between 1349 and 1353 CE.
- **Demesne:** A piece of land attached to a manor and retained by the owner for their own use.
- **The Little Ice Age:** It was a period of regional cooling, particularly pronounced in the North Atlantic region which occurred after the Medieval Warm Period.
- **Open-field System:**The traditional medieval system of farming in England, in which land was divided into strips and managed by an individual only in the growing season.
- **Ostsiedlung:** It is the term for the High Medieval migration period of ethnic Germans into and beyond the territories at the eastern periphery of the Holy Roman Empire and the consequences for settlement development and social structures in the immigration areas.

16.6 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. There was expansion of agriculture in Europe from the 10th to 13th centuries, into the wilderness, in what has been termed the "great clearances". Many forests and marshes were cleared and cultivated during the High Middle Ages.
2. The Medieval Warm Period was the period of warm climate in the North Atlantic region that lasted from 950 to 1250 CE.
3. The *Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* was a sequence of events in the 14th and 15th centuries that brought to an end centuries of European stability. Demographic collapse, political instabilities and religious upheavals were the three major crises that led to radical changes in society.
4. According to Robert Brenner the feudal lords and landlords controlled most of Europe's land; they could charge high enough rents or demand a hefty percentage of peasants' profit due to which peasants on these lands were forced to survive at subsistence levels and they did not possess adequate capital to invest in their farms.
5. It states that medieval agriculture had low productivity because there were inadequate pasture for farm animals and thus, shortage of nitrogen-rich manure to keep the arable land fertile.
6. Low Countries of the Netherlands and Belgium, and Flanders in northern France.
7. The Great Famine of 1315–1317 CE.
8. Many small towns of Europe were the same as the big villages. They had some features of the countryside. Therefore, they were known as *rural towns*.

9. Henri Pirenne asserted that towns originated in settlements of merchants' caravans. Initially, the traders were wandering peddlers and they selected the site of an old Roman town for settlement, due to its favourable location.
10. Manchester

16.7 Suggested Readings

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16.8 Terminal Questions

1. Briefly discuss the trends in the population of Europe in the medieval times.
2. Elucidate the volume and nature of agricultural production in medieval Europe.
3. Give a brief history of Urbanisation in medieval Europe.
4. Write a note on the growth of towns in Europe during medieval period.
5. What do you know about the beginnings of urban society and economy in medieval Europe?

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CHAPTER-17
MEDIEVAL TRADE AND COMMERCE— I

Structure:

17.0 Introduction

The rise of Islam had an impact not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the Mediterranean. The Muslims dominated the oceanic trade which continued for more than 300 years. The coming of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean failed to make any radical alteration in the structure, direction and organization in this region. The arrival of European Companies, especially the English and the Dutch, in the trading world of the Indian Ocean was a significant event. Three commodities of India namely textiles, raw silk and saltpeter were in great demand in Europe. The Europeans had to bring in bullion and cash to pay for their exports as the balance of trade was heavily in favour of India.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand Oceanic trade in the medieval world,
- Examine features of medieval India's maritime trade,
- Explain the characteristics of European trade in the Indian Ocean.

17.1 Oceanic Trade

In the medieval world, the oceanic trade was greatly affected by the rise of Islam. The Arab and Muslim merchants played asignificant role in the development of the vast commercial network for many centuries. The coastal regions of the Indian Ocean between East Africa and the China Sea comprised a zone of intense commercial exchanges, mainly controlled by Muslim

seamen and merchants. The general direction and structure of the Indian Ocean trade are remarkably clear from the middle of the 7thcentury to the end of the 15th century. There was a long line of transcontinental traffic, which ran from south China to the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The second typology of Indian Ocean trade involved short journeys and distances.

It is likely that by the early 10thcentury or even later, Arab ships and merchants called intermediate portson their way to China and back. In fact, from the beginning of the 8th century, the commercial expansion of Muslim merchants and traders across the Indian Ocean to south Asia and China is historically recorded. The achievements of Arabsenabledunification of the two arteries of long-distance trade known in antiquity between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Asia's twin channels of transcontinental trade constitute maritime traffic through the Red Sea and combined sea, river and overland travel in the Persian Gulf, Iraq and the Syrian Desert.Both these were initially brought under the political control of the Umayyad Caliphs and later under that of theAbbasids. Even the Mediterranean, which was divided between the Christian North and a Muslim South, eventually regained much of its economic unity due to the activity of merchants and traders.

Asian trade in medieval times was founded on four great products of eastern civilization – silk, porcelain, sandalwood and black pepper, which were exchanged for incense, purebred horses, ivory, cotton textiles, and metal goods. Asregards the trade with China, ships from the Persian Gulf werealready sailing to the port of Canton in the late 7th and early 8thcenturies to buythe silk textiles of China and other things. In China, the Arab land was considered as the largest storehouse of precious and diverse goods. Next to it were Java and Sumatra which formed the ancient crossroads of intercontinental trade. For more than a millennium, the three regions–southern Arabia, the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia have been a source of gems, pearls, incense, perfume, sandalwood, spices and other luxury goods.

The maritime connections of the Mongol empire strengthened after the Mongol's conquest of China in 1280 CE. During this period the two city ports of Hangchow and Zaiton flourished as attested by the accounts of travellers Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta. Zaiton was busy with ocean-going ships. When Ibn Battuta visited the city in 1343-4 CE, it appeared to him to be the greatest port in the world. Its commercial traffic exceeded that of Alexandria, and Quilon and Calicut on the Malabar Coast.

From the late 10th to the middle of the 15th century, however, there weresignificant changes in the direction of Indian Ocean trade. The fall of Abbasid Caliphate and the rise of the Fatimids in Egypt shifted the route of long-distance trade away from Baghdad and Damascus to Aden and Fustat. In India, the Turkish rulers of Delhi Sultanate conquered Gujarat in 1303-4 CE, and its maritime cities were now within the reach of Islamic social and political influence. Around the same time, the trading ports and coastal states of the Indonesian archipelago started accepting the Islamic faith and for the next 300 years the process of conversion continued. These new developments in the Indian Ocean paralleled the developments occurring in the Christian half of the Mediterranean. The expulsion of the Moorish rulers from Spain and the rise of commercial supremacy of Venice and Genoa signified the symbolic beginning of a re-alignment in the structure of world economy. Simultaneously, with the transfer of the seat of

power to Old Cairo by the Fatimids, Alexandria's economic importance as the terminus of transcontinental trade became even greater. Under the Ayyubid rulers of Egypt (1170-1260 CE), followed by the Mamluks (1260-1517 CE), Cairo's strong economic position was maintained with intensive development of the Red Sea ports.

In China, however, the economic policies of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE) produced contradictory impacts on maritime trade. Yung–lo,the third Ming emperor, (1402-24 CE), conducted a new experiment in China's economic relations with the trading nations of the Indian Ocean. It assumed the form of a highly ambitious succession of maritime expeditions between 1404 and 1433CE. However, these were eventually abandoned and the future Ming emperors were determined to close China's seashores to foreign entry. They banned the trade of Chinese merchants to foreign destinations. Ming foreign commerce, however, continued in various forms, most notablyby means of smuggling voyages to the Philippines, Tongking and Malacca.

17.2 India's Maritime Trade

In the medieval times, India's maritime trade was characterised by both continuity and change. In the ancient times, drugs, spices, the teak-wood of Malabar, precious stones, and a great variety of exotic luxuries were exported to the western world. The imports were largely confined to strategic war-animals, spices and medicaments, rarities, toys and exotic textiles. The expansion of maritime activity in the eastern waters of the Indian Ocean and the China Sea led to significant developments in trade patterns in the early medieval period.The presence of Indian merchants following the rise of great civilized states in Southeast Asia under strong Indian and Buddhist impact in the earlier centuries led to thegrowth of textile trade towards these growing markets. Spices and raw materials of Indonesia were an important component of Indian Ocean trade. In Indonesia and Malay Peninsula, the trade of these settlements was mainly in the hands of Muslim merchants of the Indian Ocean. It was mainly from Gujarat that Muslims came to settle in Indonesia. There was a substantial export of cloth from Bengal to the Indonesian markets. Evidences of India's trade with Africa and ArabianPeninsulahave also been found. However, a great deal of the Western trade occurred to more distant markets, notably to Cairo, and to Old and New Hormuz for redistribution to more distant overland markets in Iran, the West, Russia and Central Asia.

According to Genevieve Bouchon and Denys Lombard, before the advent of the Portuguese, there was an extraordinary movement in the Indian Ocean during the 15thcentury. The initial years of the 15thcentury witnessed, what can be called, the "last flowering" of the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. In fact, Simon Digby has signified the significance of the Chinese factor in the Indian Ocean in the three centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese, though they withdrew from the western routes in the 1430s. Malacca, however, continued to be the meeting place of the Chinese, Indian and Malay traders. The Arabs were perhaps losing in the west while the withdrawal of the Chinese created an important vacuum in the east. It was primarily the Gujratis who filled in the vacuum thus created. The overseas trade of Gujratis saw a significant expansion in the 15thcentury. Ashin Das Gupta has argued that in the 16th century, the real change in the Indian Ocean was brought about not so much by the presence of Portuguese as by the rise of the Mughals, the Safavids and the Ottoman in the western Indian Ocean. After the first violent proposal, the Portuguese settled within this structure and were "swallowed by it"in a way.

Indian shipping, largely carried out by the Gujarati Muslims, was engaged in trade mostly in the middle Indian Ocean, controlling the sea-routes between Cambay and Malacca. To the west, Indian ships made regular journeys to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf ports but Arab ship owners dominated the carrying trade in the Arabian Sea. Chinese ships kept all others out from the waters between southern China and Malaya, while Malay and Javanese vessels were dominant in the Indonesian waters. This loose knit structure of Indian foreign trade remained almost intact in the next three centuries.

The longest and glamorous trade route was from Aden to Malacca via either Gujarat or Malabar where the goods entering the Red Sea comprised cottons, indigo, spices and drugs. The imports included European woollens, silk and bullion. Most of the cloths and indigo came from Gujarat. Pepper came from Malabar and cinnamon from Sri Lanka. Malacca received cloths from India and bullion from the Red Sea in return for pepper, mace, nutmeg and cloves from eastern Indonesia, and silk and porcelain from China. Another major sea-routebrought slaves, ebony, ivory and gold from east Africa and in return cloths, beads and foodstuff were provided. Horses, pearls, Persian silks and carpets camethrough another route from the Hadramawt and the Persian Gulf via Hormuz. Bengal provided cloths and provisions in the Bay of Bengal. Coromandel exported cloths and yarns. In the south, Sri Lanka produced precious stones and cinnamon, and to the east, Pegu provided precious stones and metals in return for cloths. In the late 15thcentury, Indian traders maintained a strong presence in Southeast Asia.

Cheap quality textiles and coarse piece-goods used for everyday wear were exported throughout Asia. Staple food items such as rice, wheat, pulses, oil, and ghee were important items of India’s exports and were in great demand in the Indian Ocean region. Bengal, Orissa and the Kanara coast were the major grain-surplus areas which not only supplied the deficit pockets along the Indian coasts, but their supplies fed the cities of Malacca, Hormuz and Aden. These evidencesdisprove a part of J. C. Van Leur’s thesis regarding the characterisation of the Indian Ocean trade in the late medieval times.

According to Van Leur Asian trade was characterised by exchange of luxury goods which was small in bulk but high in value. This has been refuted by MeilinkRoelofz, Ashin Das Gupta, M. N. Pearson, Sushil Chaudhury and Michel Morineau, among others. Undoubtedly, luxuries were exchanged and bullion was India’s prime import.However, one can never underestimate the importance of west Asian market for Indian import of bullion.

The Portuguese control of the Indian overseas trade in Gujrat had some impact. The advent of Portuguese ushered in a new era in the region. However, Van Leur opined that even in the 16th century, Asian maritime trade continued to be very important. He argued that the Portuguese were unable to control even the important pepper and spice trade.Niels Steinsgaardindicated that there was no substantial increase in the volume of black pepper and spice export by oceanic route to Europe before the export of these items by the Dutch and English East India Companies in the early 17th century.C. R. Boxer believe that more pepper was being carried by Gujarati ships from Acheh to the Red Sea in the late 16th century than was being taken by the Portuguese from the

Cape to Lisbon.According to an estimate by L. F. Thomaz, the Portuguese export of cloves to Europe through entire 16thcentury was only one-tenth of the total production in Moluccas. In terms of the total Asian spice trade, the role of the Portuguese was even restricted.

17.3 Europeans in the Indian Ocean

In the 17th and first half of the 18thcentury, the Indian maritime tradeexperienced a substantial expansion as compared to the position in the 16thcentury. The importance of the Red Sea trade for the Indian overseas trade was a significant feature of the Indian Ocean during this period. The foreign trade of India as a whole saw a tremendous growth due to tripartite involvement of the Dutch, English and the Frenchapart from the contribution of the Indian maritime merchants. It was the big market for spices in Europe and the hugereturn derived from it by the Portuguese that encouraged the establishment of the English East India Company in 1600 CE and Dutch East India Company in 1602 CE. Later in 1664 CE, the French East India Company came into existence. The Ostend, Swedish and Danish Companies on a modest scale, began their trade only in the early 18thcentury. However, it was actually the two giants, the Dutch and the English East India Companies who, among themselves, accounted for a huge proportion of this trade.

17.3.1 Items Exported from India

The English and the Dutch concentrated on acquiring pepper and other spices from India. However, they obtained pepper from the so-called Spice Islands in the Indonesian archipelago instead of Malabar and Kanara. As a result, there was a noticeable shift of the European trade from India to Indonesian archipelago and it was only after about three quarters of a century that India again became the centre of the European trade. The European Companies bought these commodities with silver obtained from the “new world”. However,they were surprized to find that it was not silver but cheap, coarse Indian piece-goods which were in great demand in those islands. Therefore, they turned their attention to India for obtaining these textiles so that they could acquire spices in the Indonesian archipelago in exchange for Indian textiles. So the Companies turned mainly to the Coromandel Coast for obtaining cheap and coarse calicoes for exchange in the Indonesian archipelago. When the trade in the Coromandel Coast became uncertain and expensive as a result of wars, famines and political instability in the region, the focus of the Companiesshifted to Bengal.

The Companies realised thattrade in Bengal had certain advantages because it was not only the largest producer of cheap cotton piece-goods, but also of high quality, low-priced raw silk and saltpetre which was in great demand in Europe. So it was because of these reasons that both the Dutch and the English established their factories in Bengal in the early half of the 17th century. However, it was not until the 1670s that the Bengal trade assumed any significance in the Asiatic trade of either Company. It was from this time that there was a sudden expansion in the European export of Bengal raw silk. However, it was the big boom in the export of Bengal textiles from the early 1680s that revolutionised the pattern of the Asiatic trade of the European Companies. Since then, Bengal became the most prominent partner of the European trade from Asia which was mostly carried on by the Dutch and the English Companies. But after the victory of the Britishin the

Battle of Plassey in 1757 CE, it was a completely different story. The English East India Companybecame determinedto eliminate all other European and Asian rivals from any valuable trade in the area.

In the early 18thcentury, about 40 per cent of the average annual value of Asian commodities sent by the Dutch company to Holland was supplied by Bengal. Apart from this more than 50 per cent of the total value in textiles the Dutch exported from Asia was in the form of Bengal textiles. Thus, Bengal became the most important centre of the Dutch East India Company not only in India but in the entire Asia.The same was the case with the English East India Company. The Bengal trade was often called as 'the best flower of the Company's garden' or 'the choicest jewel' by the English factors. However, the Companiesalso traded with other regions like the Coromandel Coast, Gujarat and Malabar. A gradual and distinct pattern of trade developed later on.The intra-Asian trade which was earlierconducted by the Portuguese was largely replaced and taken over by the Dutch. But direct Euro-Asian trade was promoted and developed by both Dutch and English Companies with an enthusiasm clearly lacking in the days when the Portuguese were the only European traders in Asia.

The 17thcentury, in fact, was marked by a basic transformation in the nature of the Euro-Asian trade. While the English were not engaged in the intra-Asian trade, for the Dutch this was a significantelement of their Asiatic trade for the most part of the century. Initially, cheap Indian calicoes from the Gujarat and Coromandel, and then from Bengal, were crucial for obtaining pepper and spices from the Indonesian archipelago. The principal item exported to Japan wasBengal raw silk, while opiumwas the chief item of export to the eastern archipelago.

In the second half of the 17thand the first two decades of the 18thcentury, the Dutch seemed ahead of the English in the export trade to Europe but the latter nearly equalled with the former at the close of the century. The English went ahead of the Dutch around the mid-1720s and this trend continued till the mid-1740s when the Dutch trade recovered again to almost equal the English trade. Around the 1730s, the French emerged as a formidable rival of the English and the Dutch.

Textiles, raw silk and saltpetre were the principal items exported by the European Companies. Opium was the chief item in the Dutch export to Batavia. Apart from this, indigo was highly priced as a profitable export article but it was later on supplanted by Bengal raw silk and saltpetre. In the export list of all the European Companies, textile was the most important commodity. There was anextraordinary increase in the textile export which was well reflected in contemporary European, literature. The most important factor in the sudden and huge demand for Indian textiles in Europe was fashion rather than low cost of Indian fabrics.

17.3.2 Imports into India

The chief commodities of imports to India were precious metals, mainly silver. In the 17thand first half of the 18thcentury,this "bullion for goods" nature was the chiefcharacteristics of the Indo-European trade. Although someother commodities such as broad cloth and woollens, and some minor items like non-precious metals were imported by the Companies, their volume and value was very limited. The proportion of precious metals to the total value of the goods imported into

Bengalwas 87.5 per cent. The trend was not different in the case of the English East India Company. Whereas the average proportion of treasure in the total English imports into the East Indies was about 75 per cent, this proportion in Bengal varied between 90 and 94 per cent in the first two decades of the 18thcentury. The position does not change to any significant extent till the mid-18thcentury. The influx of bullion, however, stopped almost completely after the British conquest of Bengal in 1757 CE when the investments of the English East India Company were financed by the resources of Bengal. Most of the investments of the other European Companies gradually dwindled and whatever was left was financed by money of the servants of the Company as well as private English individuals for which they received bills of exchange in Europe. The Europeans were not the only importers of bullion. The Asian merchants whose exports from Bengal exceeded to those of the Europeans also had to bring in bullion to pay for their procurements. One significant point to be noted here is that the balance of trade was in India's favour.

Self-Check Exercise

1. In the medieval times, Asian trade was founded on which four great products of eastern civilization?
2. Name the two city ports that flourished in China as per the accounts of travelers Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta.
3. Which period has been called as the last flowering of Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean?
4. Name the historian who argued that in the 16th century, the real change in the Indian Ocean was brought about not so much by the presence of Portuguese as by the rise of the Mughals, the Safavids and the Ottoman in the western Indian Ocean.
5. Name a factor which encouraged the establishment of the English and Dutch Companies in India.
6. Name any one item of export from India to Europe.
7. What revolutionized the pattern of the Asiatic trade of the European Companies?
8. What was called as 'the best flower of the Company's garden' or 'the choicest jewel' by the English factors?
9. What was the chief item of the Dutch export to Batavia?
10. What were the chief items of imports to India from Europe?

17.4 Summary

- In medieval times, the oceanic trade gave rise to large scale interaction between Europe and Asia. The trading activities had a great impact on the society, economy and polity in the two regions.
- After the rise of Islam in Arabian Peninsula, the maritime trade was dominated by Arab seamen and merchants for almost three centuries. This trade was primarily responsible for uniting the two arteries of long distance trade between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean.

- The Europeans started to gradually replace Arabs as the dominant maritime traders from 11th century onwards. The Italian merchants were the first to take the lead.
- Later on, the Portuguese managed to riseas the leaders in the overseas trade. During this period India emerged as one of the important centres of maritime trade.
- Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish their hold in the entire Indian Ocean and India as the main centre for their trading activities in Asia.
- Indian merchants also played a major role and held considerable share in maritime trade from 15thcentury onwards. There was intense rivalry between the Dutch and British from the beginning of the 17th century to control the oceanic trade in Asia and Europe.
- The main commodities which were imported in Europe were spices, raw silk, rice and sundry fruits.Later on, indigo, saltpeter, cotton and silk textiles and sugar dominated the exports to Europe.
- The Europeans brought mainly woollens, a few luxury items and mainly bullion into India. The balance of trade was in favour of India.
- The share of Asian merchants in Indian exports was much higher than the European trading companies.

17.5 Glossary

- **Archipelago:** A sea or stretch of water having many islands.
- **Bullion:** Gold or silver in bulk before coining, or valued by weight.
- **Calico: Cotton cloth especially with a coloured pattern printed on one side.**
- **Exotic:**Originating in or characteristic of a distant foreign country.
- **Porcelain:** A hard, shiny substance made by heating clay. It is used for preparing cups, plates and ornaments.

17.6 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Silk, porcelain, sandalwood and black pepper.
2. Hangchow and Zaiton
3. The initial years of the 15th century.
4. Ashin Das Gupta
5. Big market for spices in Europe and the huge return derived from it by the Portuguese.
6. Spices, especially pepper.
7. Big boom in the export of Bengal textiles from the early 1680s.
8. Bengal trade
9. Opium
10. Bullion

17.7 Suggested Readings

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4. Donkin, Robin A, *Between East and West: The Moluccas and the Traffic in Spices Up to the Arrival of Europeans*, Diane Publishing Company, 2003.
5. Lach, Donald Frederick, *Asia in the Making of Europe: The Century of Discovery*, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

17.8 Terminal Questions

1. How did the rise of Islam affect the oceanic trade till the 10^{th}century?
2. What was the pattern of European trade between 11^{th} and 15^{th}centuries?
3. Give a brief account of the India maritime trade in the 15^{th}century.
4. How did the British and Dutch Companies influence trading activities in Indian Ocean?
5. What were the items of export and import of the European trade in medieval India?

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CHAPTER-18
MEDIEVAL TRADE AND COMMERCE— II

Structure:

18.0 Introduction

The period between 1000 and 1300 CE was marked by an expansion of European commerce. According to Carlo M. Cipolla, this period witnessed urbanisation, demographic growth, and use of new technologies and monetisation of economy. In developing trade between the East and the West,the Italian merchants rose as intermediaries. The rise of Venice during 10thcentury showed that it served as border market between the Byzantine East, the Muslim South and Catholic West. Subsequently,as a result of the spread of trading network cities like Genoa, Pisa, Piacenza, Siena, Florence and Milan witnessed growth.European participation in maritime trade increased between 14th and 17thcenturies. In the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean there was development ofnumerous ports and commercial centres. The Portuguese emerged as the main trading nation and started dominating trading activities. In England, Holland and Francelarge trading companies were established.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the pattern of trade in the medieval world,
- Examine the various land and sea trading routes,

- Know about the centres of commercial activities during the medieval times,
- Explain various commercial practices to facilitate commercial transactions in the medieval world.

18.1 Pattern of Trade

During the medieval times, staple commodities, luxurious items, precious metals, horses, weapons and slaveswere the commodities of trading transactions. However,the nature and volume of local and inter-regional trade was not same everywhere. India was well-known for exporting spices and cotton clothes. Africa and America were popular for gold, silver and slaves. Arab traders activelysold horses, slaves, Persian silk and Mediterranean products like clothes, wine and grain in Asia and Eastern Africa.

The Byzantine Empire had trading contacts with the Slavic countries in the 9th century and it slowly opened up the Russian markets. Byzantium was the centre of manufacturing luxury goods and was renowned for its trade in the products of Constantinople such as perfumes and silk ware.

The inter-regional commercial activity was located on the periphery of Western Europe during this period. Frisians were the earliest intermediaries in the trade of NorthWestern Europe which occurred along the riverRhine. The Scandinavians crossed the central Russian watershed regularly on their way from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from there to Byzantium during the 9th and 10th centuries. These traders exported honey, furs and slaves to the Near Eastand imported spices, wine, textile and metal works.

Italian merchants played acrucial role in trade in the 10th century. They imported silks, velvets, damasks, Russian furs, spices and dyestuffs from the eastwhich were sold throughout western and central Europe. They exported timber, arms, woollen goods and slaves to the East. Thus, the Italian merchants were mainly involved in re-export. They acquired goods from the East and exported them to the Western Europe. However, various city-states in Italy developed manufacturing units over a period of time.

TheNorth European commerce was restricted to essential commodities such as grain, fish and timber. The valley of the Somme and the Seine provided grain. Prussia and Poland emerged as the main granaries of Europe. In the Baltic, fisheries of Skania (Sweden) supplied fish to Western Europe. Bordeaux wasfamous for wine trade. Timber was carried from the plains of Flanders and the Netherlands. North German towns acted as intermediaries in the supply of salt which was obtained from the Bay of Bourgneuf.

There were trading links between Muslim world and Western merchants in southern Europe. While the former bought Frankish and Scandinavian swords, European timber, iron, tin and copper, latter purchased cloths and spices.

The 9th and 10th centuries in Eastern Europe were marked by the widening of trading network. The Arab Merchants frequently reached the Slav lands. The Slavonic states traded in slaves, furs, honey and wax. Russia emerged as the principal trading agent and acted as the clearinghouse for other Slavonic and Baltic Countries. Novgorod became the chief centre of trade with Baltic during the 12th century. Beeswax, fur and silver occupied an important place in this trade.

The fabrics of Flanders reached Bohemia and later on Bohemia imported cloth from Cologne, Aachen, Mainz and other towns. It had trading contacts with Poland and Hungary. Mining products and cattle from Hungary was exported to upper Germany, Italy and Vienna. Metal and luxury goods were exported to Bruges from Poland during the 13th century.

Low Countries were also a significant area of trade. Flanders was the first to develop cloth manufacture. However, in the 13th century they faced hard competition from Brabant which led to the manufacturing of middle quality cloth by the Flanders. In order to meet the growing demand of the Mediterranean region,there was import of wool from England and Spain. The main currents of commerce were from East to West along the Mediterranean, North and Baltic Sea during the 14th century.

There was extensive trading networks in America. Hurons played an important role in fur trade in the Lawrency valley. Mesoamericareceived turquoise and silver from New Mexico. In return, the Aztecs traded in several commodities accumulated from different places. Rubber was obtained from Vera Cruz, chocolate from Chiapas, jagnar pelts and honey from the Yucatan, gold from Nicaragua, cacao from Honduras or El Salvador and gold from Costa Rica. The Mayanstraded in luxury goods such as leather work and skins. During the 14th and 15th centuries, the advent of colonial rule in this region and Africa by Spain and Portugal also altered the very nature of business.

The volume of inter-regional trade was not huge. The majority of European population still relied on local products. The mass movement of goods in medieval times was dependent on cheap water transport. For example, in 1273 CE, England exported 35,000 sacks of wool. Sweden annuallyexported 10, 0000 tons of herrings to the Hanse towns and 24,000 tons of salt was imported in return.

Massive trade to Europe in spices textiles, indigo, sugar and saltpetre were the highlight of 16th—17thcenturies. A majority of these commodities were taken from India and other Asian countries

18.2 Trade Routes

The movement of goods within regions and to outside areas depended on the extension and use of trading routes. Land and water routes were used during the medieval times. The role of Arab merchants in forging widespread trading contacts have been highlighted by Robert Lopez. Central Asian traders extensively used land routes. The Mediterranean world was linked with India, Iran and China by means of caravan routes. The trading posts of Muslim traders were located in Sind and Gujarat. They had an important colony at Saymur, near Mumbai in the 10th century.

On their way to India, the travellers used the Red sea ports of Jor and Jidda and Ubullah in the Persian Gulf. Since the Chinese vessels did not go as far as Basra, Siraf emerged as an important trading port and became the nodal point of trade between Yemen and the Red Sea. Important role in trade was played by the town of Muscat and the Coastal parts of Oman.

As a result of the actions of the Chinese authorities, trade wasconcentrated in Malacca during the 9th century. Eastern and Southern coasts of China were used for foreign trade during the rule of Late T'ang and Sung dynasty. The bulk of foreign trade flowed through Canton in the Late T'ang period. Under the Southern Sung, Chuan-Chou,located near the tea and porcelain-producing areas in Fukien, became the leading port. Korea also had trading contacts with Japan.

Before 1100 CE, Central Africa had indirect contact with the Indian Ocean. The 'Age of Discovery' led to more trading contacts between Africa, Asia, America and Europe. For international trade, the Mediterranean, Baltic, Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea were extensively used. In contradiction to Pirenne's research, a number of studies have shown thatMediterranean shipping was unaffected by the expansion of Arabs.

According to French geographerPierre Gourou, since 11th century,four major routes were used by Italian merchants across the Mediterranean. There were two overland caravan routes linked with trade in silk and Chinese curios. The first route stretched from china to the Black sea, along the steppes of Southern Siberia. The second route passed through the Turkistan desert and linked Iran. From Iran, this land route was connected to the head of the Persian Gulf. Thus, the land and sea routes were interconnected. The other two sea-routes were from the Indian Ocean. One such sea-route from India passed through Malacca and the East Indies whichjoined at the Persian Gulf. Travellers using the abovementioned sea-route, had to commute through the desert for reaching the ports of Palestine and Syria. The sea-route from the Red sea to the Gulf of Aqaba or Suez considerably reduced the land journey to Alexandria.

Italian and other merchants trading to the south used a number of routes across England and Francesince the 11thcentury. Many routes connected Brabant with France. A network of routes across Northern France converged on Compiegne and Troyes.

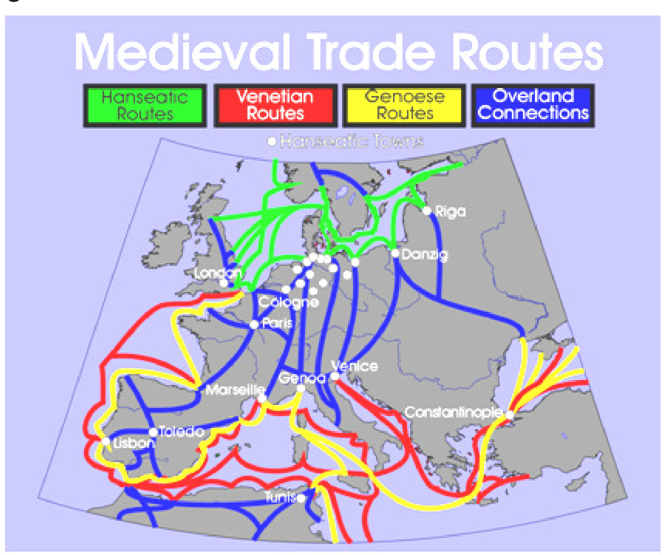
During the12thcentury Hellweg which divided northern Germany from Dortmund in Westphalia was the main connection to the Slavonic East but in the later on four trans-continental routes between Bruges and Baltic were developed. It was economical to userivers for importing timber from the Baltic and Norway in Southeastern parts of England. The use of Dutch rivers and canals, extending along the east to west led to the rise of Holland as a trading centre. Lubeck and Hamburg served as the main replenishing places for the goods of Bruges. In fact most of the great European rivers-the Rhine, the Weser, the Elbe in Germany, the Loire, the Rhonx, and theGaronne in France carried heavy long-distance trade. In England, the Thames, the Stour, the Avon, the Trent and many other rivers were used for internal trade.

Volga route was widely usedin Eastern Europe. The trade between Russia and Byzantine was conducted from the Baltic either through the Gulf of Finland or via the Gulf of Riga and the Dvina. From the latter goods were transported to the Dnieper and the Black Sea.

Frisian Dorstad, the Danish Haithabu and the Swedish Birka were the chief centres of Baltic trade in the 9th century. The connection between the Baltic countries and the North-Western Russia was provided by the waterway, which extended, from the Baltic up to Neva into Lake Ladoga and the Volkhov to Novgorod.

The use of aforementioned sea-routes depended on the shipping industry. A majority of merchant's ships were carvel built (with planks joined) and were light and fast. Genoese Galleys began to sail via Cadiz and Seville to France, Flanders and England by 1277 CE. Naves carried the freight in the Mediterranean.

A number of improvements were made in China. Stern rudder emergedduring the rule of the T'ang and Sung dynasty. These were more than sixty meters in length, with flat bottoms and thin kneel. These ships having three to a dozen masts were equipped with square sails. They could carry up to thousand persons. Navigation was facilitated by the use of marine compass. Pontoon bridges were used in Baghdad. These were connected at both ends by iron chains and were attached at each bank to firmly fixed posts. Thus, canals were utilized for local transport. Camels were extensively used on the land. Galley was used by the Arabs for carrying goods to foreign lands.



Source: www.acpsd.net

18.3 Centers of Commercial Activities

The commercial transaction of commodities occurred through specific centres of exchange and trade. These can be traced in some form or the other to the ancient times.We find references from almost all cultures about the existence of periodic markets at local level. Some of these had particular commodities of trade while others had a range of them. For example, in India, temporary markets known as*haat* or *penth* were held in all parts of the country throughout history and continue in various forms even at present. With the development of settled societies regular and fix centres for trading purposes also developedalongside periodic markets. The growth of urban centres and large scale transactions spread over large regions brought about a big change in these trading centres or markets. In the medieval world the centres of exchange are classified in two broad categories of markets and fairs.

18.3.1 Markets

In the medieval period,the growing commercial activities witnessed rapidspread of markets and towns. There was market in almost every town and there was more than one market in bigger towns. All the big towns of Europe—London, Paris, Moscow, Barcelona, Venice, Madrid, Lisbon, Bavaria, Cologne, Lyons etc.had big markets often extending with the growth of towns or in many cases growing markets were expanding the limits of towns.Markets in big

towns specialised in certain commodities such as corn, fish, beef, cloths, livestock, wine, cheese and butter fruits and vegetables etc. Everitt estimatedthat in 16th and 17thcenturies England and Wales had around 800 localities with regular markets. In addition to these there were regular fairs. The situation was similar in other European countries. According to an estimate, during the close of 16thcentury there were around 3200 towns in India. Surat, Agra, Lahore, Multan, Patna, Dacca, Delhi, Bijapur, Masulipatnam, Broach, Cambay, Dindigul were centres of international trade. There were markets in all big towns in the Arab World. Towns such as Aden, Jeddah, Istanbul, Hormuz, Baghdad, Mecca, Basra had markets which attracted traders from far flung areas. Similar was the case with China.Almost all towns of China attracted traders from Central Asia, Africa and India. In Egypt, the city of Cairo had more than 30 markets. Even Latin America had their own markets in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, when they were colonized by the Europeans. Almost all the medieval trade had network within region and across regions. Commodities regularly flowed in the village, small town and big cities Peddlers, small merchants and big merchants all had their own specialised trading commodities which found their way to specific destinations. Tapan Ray Chaudhuri categorizes Indian market in 16th – 17thcenturies into four main types:

(i) the emporia for long distance trade, inland, overland or overseas;

(ii) small scale bazaars where goods were collected from places mainly for purpose of local consumption and *mandi* or wholesale markets;

(iii) periodic fairs where particular traders met together to sell and replenish their stocks but consumer were not excluded;

(iv) the truly isolated rural markets where the local surplus produce was exchanged among the producers-cum-consumers.Perhaps, a more or less similar pattern was followed in other regions in the medieval world.

18.3.2 Fairs

The fairs were primarily associated with religious and ritual festivals. However, with the expansion of trading activities most of them became centres of commercial activities also. These fairs were of different sizes attracting people of only particular region, across regions and across countries. The frequency of holding fairs was also not even. It could vary from being monthly, once in a few months, twice a year or once a year or even once in a few years. They were organized in particular seasons or time of the year. Some fairs were known for particular commodities. Commodities in fairs were wide ranging. These included slaves, cattle, grains, arms, craft products to precious or luxury goods.

With the increase in the volume of trade and its connection with international trade, relationship between markets and fairs became clearer. To begin with, the fairs were connected with religious celebrations but gradually they became trade centres. The Lendit fair held in June at St. Denis in the 11thcentury was a religious fair. Louis VI inaugurated another fair in the plains of St Denisbetween 1109 and 1112 CE. After 1213 CE, both fairs were merged into a single fair known as 'The Lendit of the plain of St Denis'. Flanders fairs at Torhout became a centre of intensive commercial and industrial activity in the 11th century.

Fairs held at Champange became the foci of international trade. Six fairs were organized in four towns of the countries of Champange and Brie. In these fairs, the merchants of France, Italy, England, Germany, Switzerland and Savoy brought clothes, woollen, silk, leather, fur, lines, spices, wax, sugar, grain, wine and horses for sale in these fairs. Genoa became the centre of trade from 1250 CE onwards. The fairs of Troyes, Provins, Lagny and Bar-Sur-Aube also attracted merchants from far-flung areas.

Many fairs were continued for centuries. Lendit fair was traced to 9thcentury, Troyes fairs to Roman times and Lyons fair to 172 CE. All big European towns had their fairs which were known for extensive trading activities and great fun for the whole town. Paris, London, Hague, Venice, Leipzig all had their particular fairs. In the 16th century, Antwerp and Bergen-op-zoom had four major fairs. Several fairs were connected together and formed specific circuits with merchants moving from one fair to the other. India had its own fairs. A number of these were religious but trading went alongside. The biggest fair (*Kumbh*) was held once in 6 and 12 years in different religious cities. Egypt, Syria and Arabia were well-known for their fairs. *Hajj* or the pilgrimage to Mecca was one of the big occasion for traders who reached here from all around with every conceivable commodity. Hormuz had a seasonal trade lasting three to four months and was like a fair. Alexandria had great trading activity for two months (September-October). In East Asia, Bantam in Jawa was famed for its trading markets and fair. Like India, China had its fairs related with religious occasions. Herethe markets and trade was closely governed by the state.

The amazing thing about these fairs is the wide range of participation. Big merchants, middlemen, small shop keepers, peddlers and common men all participated. On the basis of the size and importance of each fair, the merchants were attracted from far-away places to the neighbouring areas. Two big fairs were held every year in Antwerp. One of them was famous for horses brought from Denmark. There was widespread use of credit and money market in these fairs. Fernand Braudel opines that if the fair is imagined as a pyramid, the base consist of several small transactions in local goods, which are generally cheap and perishable, then one moves up towards the luxury goods, expensive and transported from far way. At the very top of pyramid is the active money market without which trading was impossible.He further holds that fairs seem to have evolved in such a manner so as to focus on credits rather than items, at the tip of the pyramid rather than the base.

Generally, the merchants would bring several bills of exchange and they were settled here. Here the exchange for different currencies rates were fixed here by big traders. By the 18th century the fairs had began to decline as major centres of commercial activities in Europe. Although many of them continued but more as tradition and fun.

18.4 Commercial Practices

The commercial transactions became complex due to the growth of trading activities and long distance trade over land and seas. The trading transitions involvedmany risks. The merchants dreaded sea-pirates and natural disasters at sea. The capital required for purchasing

the goods was to be generated. Money was required for buying commodities in remote places and sale profits were also to be carried back. It was difficult to carry large quantities of gold currency to far flung areas. As a result many new commercial practices and institutions emerged to take care of the growing business.

18.4.1 Credit and Money Lending

Credit system was rampant in the trading activities. The wholesalers used to give things on credit to the retailers and the latter in turn to the consumers even at the regional and local levels. In small business the small traders, middlemen and suppliers were always at the brink. If the amount was not returned it could ruin the creditor. Funding for large scale commercial transactions was facilitated by the growth of trade. Big merchants provided this funding. It emerged as a specialised activity with separate category of money lenders. However, most of big traders continued to deal in providing funds on credit. In Europe and India, the nobles also used to lend money for business.

In Europe, the practice of giving maritime loan to a merchant was existing for a long time. Such loan was repaid only after the ship had arrived safely at fixed destination. The maritime loan was of great advantage as it offered credit and insurance to the borrower. However, the rate of interest on it was very high. This loan was banned by the Church in 1230 CE. But the practice continued by converting it into an exchange contract.

Pierre Gourou has highlightedmany devices used by Italian merchants for generating capital. A periodic partnership for one season called as *Commenda* was in vogue. It was a partnershipsettled between a financer and a merchant. The financer provided the capitaland the merchant undertook journey for conducting trade. *Colleganza*was another type of partnership between merchants. Under this partnership, one merchant provided only the capital, another merchant, while providing capital was also engaged in trade. Sources indicate that *Commenda* declined in Genoa by the latter half of the 13thcentury. It was replaced by *Compagnia* or partnership. Initially such partnership brought together family members having capital.However,slowly these gave way to *Corpidi:Compagnia* or Capital of the society.

The payment of debts was also vital for commercial transactions. Often merchants either did have cash or lacked the resources to purchase goods. They had to borrow and debts were repaid during the fairs. At the fairs, payment was done on the last day. The transactions were recorded. These written writs guaranteed the payment of debts by merchants who had borrowed money. This was how the credit system developed. It did not depend on the transportation of coins. According to Henry Pirenne the fair served as an embryonic clearinghouse for the European economy.

Apart from currency, a number of methods were used to facilitate exchange. “Fair letter” was one such mechanism which was prevalent in the Netherlands. It recorded debt in the presence of many municipal magistrates. It was written in the form of a divide letter, two copies being written on the one sheet of Parchment. It was torn into two and was handed over to Magistrate and Creditor. The fittingof these two portions together authenticated the deed. Thus, there was a right to exact payment with a “fair letter”.

The lenders used to charge a certain interest from the debtors. The Christian Church had prohibited usury in Europe. The Church believed that the only way of earning money should be through work and earning profits from money does not have religious sanction. Islam also forbids charging interest. Due to this ideology, the Jews were the main money lendersuntil 13thcentury. Much of resentment against Jews and their persecution can be attributed to their money lending business. The ban by Church, however, met with partial success and many Christian groups still followed money lending and sometimes camouflaged and circumvented it in several ways. A distinction was also forwarded by articulated that if loan is granted for some personal purpose charging interest would be usury and is sinful while using loan for business to earn more money should not be considered usury. Means of exchange also helped in advancing money with commission and escape the charge of usury.

The rate of interest was charged at the rate of around 20% and they could settle for upto 10%. Interest rates in India varied from region to region and could range from 9 to 18%. However, the interest rates depended on several factors and could be as high as 100%. The factors taken into account were the distance, credibility of the party raising loans, the bargaining ability of debtor and risks involved in the merchandise and location.

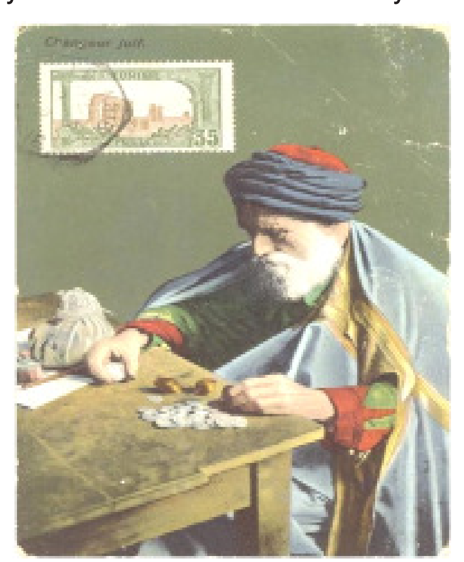
18.4.2 Instruments of Exchange, Money Changing and Banking

The use of currency was important for the trading activities. A number of methods were devised to issue required currency by the state in different parts of the world. In China, during the reign of T'ang and Sung dynasty, in addition to coins paper money and paper credit was also used. The T'ang was issued 'flying cash' to pay for goods acquired in far flung areas as early as 811 CE. These money drafts could be reimbursed at the capital. Many such drafts were issued under the Sung dynastywhichwere exchanged between merchants who desired to transfer credits. Another type of paper money was developed by the private bankers. They used certificates of deposit, which could be cashed for a 3% service charge. These certificates were circulated freely at face value. The certificates issued by the bankers of Chengtu in Szechwan were very well-known. When the government took them over in 1204 CE, they became the world's first genuine paper money. These certificates were valid for a period of three years. During the Tokugawa period in Japan, the individual daimyo used rice and silver certificates as paper money within their provinces. In India, the merchants used both currency and paper transactions such as *Hundi* (a word derived from Sanskrit which means 'to collect').

During the middle ages, it is important to emphasize the basis of using currency as the medium of exchange. The money used in actual payment was first converted into the standard of value and large transactions were always paid by weight. Various currencies such as florins, guilders, ducats, pounds etc. were used fortrading. The experts used to assess the coin's value by determining how much precious metal it contained. People evaluated coins not at their face value but according to their metal content. Thus, coined money did not serve as the comprehensive means of payment in the medieval times. The important role of moneychangers contributed to their controlling large amounts of money and influencing the transfer of money and even extended time loans to merchants and bankers.

The role of moneychangers became important due to different currencies and their value. During the 9^{th} century practice of money changing was prevalent in Western Europe.Moneychangers were active in Genoa in the second half of the 12^{th} century. They were known as *bancherii* (the word was derived from the bench on which money lenders managed coins). These moneychangers exchanged coins and accepted deposits from their customers. They were paid small amount to keep the money safe. These deposits were used to pay off debts in remoteareas. The bill of exchange also made its appearanceby the close of the 12^{th} century. Moneychangers used to write these bills and guaranteed the payment abroad in foreign money to the merchants. The payment was equal of the sum deposited by these merchants with moneychangers.

Moneychangers started acting as bankers with the growth of semi-permanent money markets. They not only deposited money but also gave credit to customers and got engaged in overseas trade. They entered into partnerships which enabled transfer of funds even when debtors and creditors had accounts with different institutions. There was widespread use of non-negotiable bills and notes by the middle of the 14^{th}century.



Moneychanger

Source:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Money_changer

To overcome the Church's prohibition of usury, the bill of exchange were used. Here the bills were issued at one place which could be exchanged at another place in some other currency which might have different value. The rate of exchange between the currencieshaving changing value could hide the interest charged.*Hundi* was the most important instrument of exchange in India. A 17^{th}century traveller, Tavernierobserved that almost every village had a moneychanger and banker to make remittances of money and letters of exchange. They were known as*sarraffs*. The *hundi* was issued for loansin the form of a paper, money deposit or remittance of money from one place to another and was saleable. It carried the amount, the specified period and the place where it could beencashed. Depending upon the nature of transaction, the interest and other charges (insurance, transmission or exchange charges etc.) were determined.

The bills of exchange became an instrument of trade in Europe. They were bought at less than the face value and could be realised on profit of upto 5% for export trade in another town and branch. The quality of instrument of exchange was determined by its accessibility and soundness and it was to be easily negotiable. In dealing with them, a strict code of behaviour was adopted. The bills of exchange were called *suftaja* and cheque as *saak* during the Abbasid Caliphate.

Around the 13th century, the institution of banking emerged on a full scale with resident banking establishments. Italy was the pioneer and cities such as Genoa, Lucca, Florence, Tuscany, Rome and Venice became the centres of banking activity. Numerous family firms established banks in Florence. In the 1290s, Bardi and Peruzzi families of Florence established Banks in England too. Peruzzi had branches in many European cities. By the year 1338 CEnear about 80 banking houses were running in Florence with exchanges in every part of Europe. A number of European cities had banks established by business housesby the close of the 14thand early 15thcentury. The Medici Bank of Italy was one of the most powerful banks whose headquarter was located in Florence and its branches were established in Rome, Naples, Milan, Pisa, Venice, Geneva, Lyons, Avignon, Bruges, London etc. They even became financial agents of the Church, gave credit to kings and facilitated international trade in Europe. Banks participated in trade and giving loans to traders.

Stock Exchange was another important institution that emerged in late medieval period. It was central to all trading activity. It was described as 'the meeting place of bankers, merchants and businessmen, exchange currency dealers and banker's agents, broker and other persons' in 1681 CE.Every major commercial town in Europe had an exchange by the 16th century. Braudel opines thatexchange was like the top section of a fair, but one in permanent session as it was the meeting place of important businessmen and a host of intermediaries. Business of every kind was transacted here and it also served as a finance market, stock market and money market.

18.4.3 Accounting

For regulating trade, the recording of commercial transactions was vital. In maritime trade, practice of venture accounting was prevalent in Europe. For each shipment there was a custom of operating a separate account. Role of scribe, who maintained the ship's inventory, was very important in maritime trade. All items abroad were listed and each transactions was recorded separately in the inventory. Gradually all items related to an individual were listed together. This method provided a running account. In Peruzzi Ledgers (1335-43 CE), all debts were written in the first half and credits in the rear half. In the 15th century the Italians adopted the double-entry book keeping. Thus, monetary transitions were stabilised due to the development of accounting system.

Self-Check Exercise

1. Who were the earliest intermediaries in the trade of North-Western Europe which occurred along the river Rhine?
2. Name the leading port under the Southern Sung in China.
3. Write the name of chief centers of Baltic trade in the 9th century.
4. Name any two centers of international trade in 16th century India.
5. Which fairs at Torhout became a centre of intensive commercial and industrial activity in the 11th century?

6. What was *Commenda*?
7. In which country was the "Fair Letter" mechanism for the exchange prevalent?
8. What was the currency and paper transactions used by the Indian merchants known as?
9. What were the moneychangers in Genoa called?
10. What were the bills of exchange called during the Abbasid Caliphate?

18.5 Summary

- In the medieval world commercial transactions occurred in a wide range of commodities such as spices, textiles, silk, sugar, precious metals, minerals, horses, weapons, slaves and luxury items.
- Various European countries had trading connections with each other as well as with India, China, Africa, Latin America, East Asia and the Arabia.
- At regional level trade circuits were formed and each circuit was connected with other in the movement of commodities. There was a well-developed money economy.
- Numerous markets and fairs developed as centres of exchange and became nerve centres of this trade. Specialised commercial practices were followed by them.
- Defined trade routes were adopted in over land and overseas trade. The volume of trade increased manifold as a result of maritime trade. Major changes were witnessed in navigation and ship building technology.
- New commercial practices emerged as a result of the large-scale commercial activities. Money lending and financing became an essential part of international trade.
- Money changing developed as a specialised activity taking into consideration different countries having gold and silver metallic currencies of many denominations.
- The instruments of exchange enabled the significant trade and dispensed the need of carrying huge sum of money for trading purposes.
- The institution of banking started in Italy and soon it became indispensable for trading operations.
- The institution of stock exchange provided facility for avariety of commercial activities under one roof.

18.6 Glossary

- **Daimyo:** A Japanese feudal baron.
- **Damask:** A rich, heavy silk or linen fabric with a pattern woven into it, used for table linen and upholstery.
- **Galley:** A long flat ship with sails.
- **Nobles:** High officials of the state.
- **Parchment:** The skin of sheep, goats, etc., prepared for use as a writing material.
- **Pontoon bridge:** Also known as floating bridge, this type of bridge uses floats or shallow draft boats to support a continuous deck for pedestrian and vehicle travel.
- **Usury:** The practice of lending money at unreasonably high rates of interest.

18.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Frisians
2. Chuan-Chou
3. Dorstad, Haithabu and Birka
4. Surat and Agra
5. Flanders fairs
6. A periodic partnership for one season was called as *Commenda*. It was a partnership settled between a financer and a merchant.
7. Netherlands
8. *Hundi*
9. *Bancherii*
10. *Suftaja*

18.8 Suggested Readings

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18.9 Terminal Questions

1. Give a brief account of the pattern of trade in medievalworld.
2. Discuss various trade routes prevalent during the medieval times.
3. Examine the growth of markets in medieval period.
4. How fairs were important for the trade during the period duringmedieval times?
5. Explain how the merchants arranged funds for conducting trading activities?
6. Write short notes on:

   (i) Credit and Money Lending

   (ii) Accounting

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CHAPTER-19
TRANSITION TO MODERN WORLD-I

Structure:

19.0 Introduction

The period around 1500 CE is considered by historians as the age of transition from the medieval to the modern world. This transition is applicable only for the European society since many of the key events responsible for this transition had deep effects on Europe. However, it was not exclusively confined to Europe. Many of the ideas and knowledge from the non-European worldwas borrowed by Europe, particularly from the Arabs and Chinese. In the succeeding500 years there occurred integration of different regions of the world that affected the life everywhere. Europe started rising to the stage of dominance from the late 15thcentury. The decay of feudalism resulted in changes in the agrarian structures, which were becoming more responsive to the market pressures. Geography gave an impetus to the maritime states of Europe. Asian and African societies witnessed profound changes once the traditional monopoly of the Italians in the Levant region and the Arabs in the Indian Ocean was destroyed by the discovery of new sea routes around Africa. The rise of trans-Atlantic trade routes brought the trading world much closer and marked the first stage of global integration. The process of empire building initiated the forces of capitalism based on competition and exploitation. In the political sphere, there was a transformation of state structure from a decentralised or fragmented to centralised form. It occurred not only in Europe but also in China, India and Turkey. These new political structures safeguarded trade and economic activities.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of modern world,
- Analyze the causes of the decay of feudalism,
- Examine how the decentralized political structures transformed into centralized states and the corresponding changes in other major parts of the world,
- Examine how the new trade routes contributed to the emergence of modern world.

19.1 Meaning of Modern world

The word 'modernisation'means making suitable changes and bringing reforms to meet the present day challenges. It comprises changes in political and economic structures and to develop social attitudes based on rationality and scientific approach. Modern world can also be explained as transition from agrarian to the industrial and the capitalist stage. Continuous reforms in administration, legal system, economy and society, religion and thought constitute the path of modernisation. Every society – the Europeans, the Chinese, the Indians and the Arabs significantly contributed in changing the lives of the people in their own ways. Each society developed its own model of modernisation. The discovery of sea routes by Christopher Columbus, Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco da Gama in the late 15th century may be seen in the context of a long period of preparation and development. The Arabs and the Chinese had led the rest, till this period.

In his book, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in the World Civilisation*, Marshall Hodgson places history of Islamic civilisation in the context of world history. In this work he re-examines modern history and Europe's place in it. He somewhat transcends the Eurocentric modernisation theory and in its placeconsider it as a global process. According to Hodgson, modernity does not imply westernisation. Instead of treating the post Abbasid Caliphate period till the rise of the gun powder empires' of the 16thcentury as the period of decline, he believes that it was a period of the greatest progress of Islamic civilisation that witnessed the expansion of its culture into China, India, South and South east Asia as well as into the Balkans and the Mediterranean States. He claims that the modern was not initiated by Renaissance. In its place, it brought Europe up to the cultural level of the other major civilisations. It did so in some measure by assimilating the advances of other Asian civilisations. The process of modernisation did not necessarilystarted simultaneously in all the regions of the world, synchronising with the rise of modern west. Chinese and the Arabians had already reached a considerable level of maturity when the Europeans started coming out of the feudalism. From this period the non-European regions slowed down or even stagnated because of different reasons, as compared to the west. In reality, after the 15thcentury, it was Europe that led the world and dictated changes through its scientific ideas, trade and imperialism. From this time, different civilisations began to move from the relative ignorance of each other into direct and accelerating contact across all the oceans. The physical barriers between regions had been largely overcome. From the 19th century onwards, the pace of change accelerated everywhere as the advent of industrialisation released the forces of imperialism and nationalism. A number of non-European societies were compelled to execute programmes of reforms and modernisation to defend themselves against the imperialist attacks and to occupy respectable position among nations.

19.2 Decay of Feudalism

The decay of feudalism was very slow process and it took almost three centuries and even more for the forces of capitalism to triumph. Among the first geographical regions to experience the decay of feudalism were England, Netherlands, some areas of north-western Europe and parts of France. In eastern and central Europe, feudalism continued to exist and even strengthened after the 17th century crisis. A combination of factors-demographic, trade, inner contradiction in the feudal mode of production and class conflict, resulted in the transition from medieval to modern world. North-western Europe occupieda significant place on the new trade route that developed along the Atlantic coastline in the 16thcentury. However, thedecay of feudal order had taken root earlier than this. The increasing burden of population and the excessive exploitation of the peasantry by the feudal lords had created an agricultural crisis. The indifferent nature of medieval agriculture, increasing demands for revenue, feudal restrictions, the rising expenses due to wars and increasing prices and the growing pressure of population all combined to create a crisis. The rise of world market became a vital factor in the decay of feudal order. Agriculture was forced to reinvent itself, wherever the market forces took hold.

There was a profound change in the social structure due to feudal crisis and the social balance began to change, although its pace varied from region to region. The lower order started attainingmore freedom and security. Feudal dues were progressivelysubstituted by monetary payments. The increasing costs of agricultural products, the growth of population and urbanisation resulted in rapid commercialisation of agriculture. It presented new opportunities to the enterprising landlords but created problems for the traditional feudatories. There was a steady decline in the feudal aristocracy and the growth of commercial economy led to the rise of bourgeoisie. Increase in area under cultivation and improvement in yield per unit of land was the result of growing demand. A three-field system had prevailed over most of Europe in the late medieval period.Different cropping methods were adopted to make a more intensive use of the soil. The practice of keeping a part of land fallow was abandoned. Crops such as peas, beans, turnips and green vegetables and fodder were grown. These ideas were also implemented in China. Robert Temple acknowledges the contributionof China for spreading the ideas of crop rotations, drilling, intensive hoeing of weeds, etc. European agrarian revolution was based on these ideas. Even the Arabs showed great interest in agriculture and made many innovations in this field. Under Umayyad and early Abbasid rulers, the irrigation projects on Tigris and Euphrates rivers in “Sawad” or Black land led to prosperity. The Arabs introduced rice, sugarcane, cotton, saffron, spinach and a variety of fruit crops to Spain and later to other European countries. In both China and Arabia, the respective governments showed interest in major agricultural projects such as flood control, artificial irrigation and transportation of agrarian products. In China, several agricultural techniques such as the square pallet chain pump, swan-neck hoe for weeding purpose, the rotator winnowing fan and the multi-tubes for sowing seeds in drill fashion, had been evolved. There were advancements in the field of soil conservation, improvement of crops and canal linkages. All these changes were, however, gradual and not radical.

The agrarian transformation of Europe was much wider in scope in contrast to these countries and its impact was felt beyond the regional boundaries and even in the areas of trade and manufacturing. It also had a profound impact on the social structures of various states and brought about considerable changes in their economies. European agriculture aided trade beyond the national frontiers, e.g. the Baltic region turned into the granary of European food grain, which shipped food grains to all parts of Europe by means of sea routes. The Low Countries, the Netherlands and some other regions started specializing in dairy farming. Spain, England and the Alpine lands focussed on sheep farming and began exporting wool to distant centres of production such as Flanders. Towards the end of the 15thcentury and during the 16th, a great programme of drainage and dam-building was came into motion. A wave of land reform started in many parts of Europe. In many other places, land sieges became a common practice. Market pressures led to transition from arable farming to extensive grazing. In the agrarian structure, price-factor began to determine the direction of change. Food production greatly increased and there was tremendous expansion in agriculture during the 16thcentury. Farming became more intensive and there was development of better communicationsbetween regions. Agriculture became more specialised to adapt to conditions of local benefit and to promote the division of labour. New methods of agriculture were encouraged with the establishment ofthe printing presses in all parts of Europe that led to production of literature on new agricultural practices and agricultural manuals.

However, large parts of Europe remained entangled in feudal system and it took centuries to break its shackles. After centuries of stagnation, agrarian change became the major theme from the end of the15thcentury. Regional specialisation, which had been of only minor significance during the Middle Ages, became an important aspect of agricultural production. Farmers and landlords started taking special steps in the sale and exports in order to generate additional income from agriculture. The Price Revolution of the 16thcentury was instrumental in transforming European agriculture by encouraging capitalist farming, and thus accelerating the process of decay of feudalism.With this, the class structure began to change, which laid the foundations of modern agriculture.

19.3 Transformation of Political Structures

Transformation of political structures was one of the significant developments. It was seen in Europe, East and South Asia and the Arab World.

19.3.1 Rise of Centralised States in Europe

The people of Europe in the late 15th century were governed in many ways – hereditary, elective or even joint monarchies, oligarchies and confederations and even empires. Yet the European political structure at the end of the 15thcentury was essentially feudal. The rise of strong centralised monarchies that came to rule in some parts such as France, Spain, England and Muscovy (modern Russia) was driving Europe towards the modern world. The crisis of feudal economy and the civilwars brought about important changes that affected the relationship between the changing society and the process of state-building. With the rise of strong rulers the local coercive power of the lord and his retainers over peasantry changed and the state began to monopolise the use of

force and later reduced the powers of the feudal lords, towns and corporate groups, including the Church. The rise of absolutist states, particularly in Western Europe meant the absorption of smaller states to form modern nation-states with definite boundaries. Russia is the best example of this process. From a small principality called Muscovy, Russia grew into a vast empire through this policy of territorial expansion. A similar change occurred in Spain. It also included the consolidation of centralised government under a single sovereign head, the establishment of law and order and implementation of unitary and effective measures. Absolute monarchy carried out territorial expansion and consolidation, administrative centralisation and political integration. They integrated the economies of their respective states by centralised taxation. With the help of a professional bureaucracy and judiciary, they established administrative machinery on modern lines and maintained their power by means of permanently standing armies. The formation of modern administrative, judicial and financial structure had its roots in the period of absolute states. Although the exact nature of the European absolutism is debatable, it is generally acknowledged that these states played a progressive role in enabling the rise of capitalism. These states largely played the role of tax collectors and re-distributors of private income. However, based on feudal structure, these states guaranteed the interests of trading and manufacturing classes by removing internal barriers to trade, regulating external tariff in the interest of local industries, promoting colonial activities and forming trading companies. In these ways, the absolute rulers stimulated primitive accumulation of capital and created preconditions for capitalism. Furthermore, these autocratic states became the harbingers of modern nation-states based on the principle of sovereignty. The Civil War (1642-49 CE) in Englanddemolished the feudal structure of the state and brought the new landed class and the bourgeoisie to share power. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 CE ended a prolonged struggle and established a constitutional government. The French Revolution of 1789 CE overthrew the feudal structure and opened the path for capitalist development in France. It transformed France from a medieval state to a modern nation-state by adopting extensive reforms. The concepts of equality, liberty, citizenship and sovereignty were popularised all over the world.

The Reformation movement also aided the process of state building by establishing national Church in every state. It strengthened the powers of the rulers. It gave birth to a number of new ideas such as political rights and individual freedom. Medieval Christianity was rejected in favour of secular authority.

Even thoughthe city-states of Italy do not fall into the category of absolutist state, they played a crucial role in developing the modern rules of international relations and refined the art of diplomacy.

Italian courts became the centres of politics during the 15th century. The concentration of power in the hands of the rulers was called as *stato*, a model which was emulated by many European rulers. These Italian princes made a distinct contribution to the idea of “resident diplomacy”. The Italiansmastered the techniques of modern international relations. These comprised the practice of appointing resident ambassadors in the courts of foreign rulers,

development of alliances with the opponents of their enemies, non-aggression pacts and commercial treaties. The idea of balance of power is the most important contribution of the Italian states to the modern concept of international relations. Everystate attempted to preserve its own territory and protected its interests by ensuring that no one state was strong enough to enslave the other and for this a balance was maintained by a group of states to compete with others. The cold-war period of the 20thcentury exhibited a similar trend as was the anti-French alliance against Napoleon.

19.3.2 Political Transformation in the East and South Asia

China had maintained a considerable degree of isolation from the rest of the world except for the surrounding states. From the 11th century onwards, Chinese ships sailed across Malay Peninsular and India into Arabia. The rulers of Ming Dynasty, however, imposed restrictions on this trade. Only the states which acknowledged the Chinese suzerainty were permitted to trade. Trade was seen only as a source of taxation. The advent of the "Age of Discovery" created a very different situation. In the 16th century,the incursions of the Portuguese and Spanish into southern China via new sea routes brought traders and missionaries to the region. Soon, the advances of Russia across Siberia to the Manchurian borders in the 17thcentury broke China's relative isolation of China and triggered a series of changes. By middle of the 19th century, the direct East-West contact led to a face-to-face confrontation between the two in the form of Sino-British wars. This entire period from the 16thcentury coincided with the rise of the Manchus and the establishment of Ching dynasty. The features of this period became noticeably different from those of the earlier. Although the Chinese meeting with the Europeans began in the 16thcentury, its effects were not significantuntil the 19thcentury when extensive political, administrative and economic reforms were introduced in China to meet the challenges of western imperialism.

There are two different views of historians on whether the 16thcentury or the 19thcentury should be considered as the beginning of modern China. One school of historians regard the Opium War of 1839-42 CE as the point of departure as this was the beginning of foreign imperialism and that the Chinese began a series of reforms to modernise to counter the foreign threat. This is also the period of Meiji restoration which transformed Japan into a strong modern nation. The second school of historians comprisingmainly of the Chinese scholars, consider the arrival of European explorers and missionaries during the transition from the Ming to Ching as the actual point of beginning. Western education first started in this period and it accelerated the process of change. The infiltration of the West can be regarded as the catalyst that transformed traditional China into a modern nation, although China never adopted the western model of modernisation based on capitalism. China never completely revamped the political structure till theRevolution of 1911 CE and the identity ofChina was retained and only gradual administrative changes were done. The strong centralised Chinese empire endured till 1911 CE but new administrative divisions were created from time to time to cope with the new situation created by west. There were a series of reform movements that led to the formation of modern China.

The political history of South Asia was long and rich representing different systems.It was difficult to maintain a centralised structure due to vast cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity. However, at the time of the arrival of Portuguese in India, the Indian sub-continent held a special place in the trading world. Arab traders nominally controlled trade in the Indian Ocean but effective control was actually in the hands of mixed ethnic and religious groups, who participated in this highly profitable trade that included commodities such as cotton, silk and spices. However, inter-regional traders had nodecisive influence on the state administration and the Mughal rulers were not able to anticipate the Portuguese danger in this region. The Mughal Empire observeda high degree of tolerance towards other cultures. Under their rule, a highly sophisticated culture representing a synthesis of Indian and Persian traditions emerged. The centralised state structure began to disintegrate from the late 17th century and was replaced by autonomous regional states. These political developments coincided with the rise of the British as political competitors. By the middle of the 20th century the entire South Asian region had come under the control of the European powers.In the 19th century, the first wave of modernisation appeared which representedgenerally two streams of responses. The first approach suggested that in order to reach the western standards, social awareness would have to be created through reform movements based on western model- knowledge of science, technology, political thought and liberalism. The second response emphasized the superiority of the ancient culture over the west, and the revival of greatness of the past. This region, however,exhibited an exceptionally liberal and flexible attitude in adopting western knowledge despite facing problems such as mass poverty, colonial suppression and social inequality due to a variety of factors. The spread of national movement and the direction of political reforms under the British government aided in creating a democratic political structure.

19.3.3Transformation in the Arab States

The political, economic and cultural transformation of the Arab states was brought about by the Abbasid dynasty that lasted till 1258 CE. The Abbasid Caliphate split into separate political and regional entities. Common features among them were their Islamic faith, the Arabic language and the Arabic intellectual traditions, which gradually diversified. The Caliphate got divided into three main areas, and they were sub-divided into smaller entities. The first included the 39 old lands of Iraq and Iran and the neighbouring areas. The second was centred at Egypt that controlled Syria and Palestine, while the third area was of North Africa and the Mediterranean territories encompassing parts of Spain. The Muslims in the Arab world were divided between Sunni and Shias that sometimes led to serious political consequences.

During the period of political disintegration of the Arabs, two external powers—the Ottomans and the Britishoccupied their territories. Due to the rise of Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Near East, a number of Arabian territories came under its control. The history of Arabs got inevitably intertwinedwith the Ottoman Empire after the Middle Ages. In the 15th century, the Ottomans established themselves in Turkey and then expanded in all directions, especially in Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. Moving southwards, the Turks occupied Hijaz in 1517 CE, which was ruled

from Egypt by the Mamluks. While Syria and Egypt were conquered in 1516-17 CE, the Persian invasion in 1535 CE led to the occupation of Baghdad. This was the commencement of a protracted and expensive struggle. In 1938 CE, Yemen became part of the Ottoman Empire. A struggle between the Sunnis and the *Zaydis* forced Ottomans to withdraw by 1635 CE. From this time, the political developments came to be closely tied up with trading activities of this region.

In the early 17th century, the British madecontacts in this region for establishing commercial relations. Aden was an important port, located on the southwest coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It enjoyed the advantages of good anchorage facility, strategic location as it formed a link between east and west and had a direct access to the Asian and African trade routes. The discovery of the direct sea route to India in 1498 CEseverely damaged the fortunes of Aden. The occupation of this port by the Ottomansfurther worsened the situation. In 1618 CE the British established a factory at an alternative port- Mukha (Mokha) which was followed by the Dutch and the French. After the Seven Years' War, the British established their supremacy over the Red Sea in 1763 CE.The Americans began to compete with the British after 1785 CE. In many ways, Napoleon's capture of Egypt in 1798 CE was amomentous event. He brought an Arabic press to Cairo, which became *Matba'at Bulaq*, the official printing institution of the government for publicity. He also established *acadèmie littéraire* with a library. Until now, the people of the Arabia were generally leading a self-contained, conventional life. This was asudden encounter with the west outside the sphere of trade that sparked an intellectual stimulus. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the establishment of autonomous and westernised dynasty there brought many Syrian and Lebanese writers in search of a free environment, making Egypt the centre of Arabic Renaissance. In the 19th century a literary movement known as *Annahdah al-Adabiyah*was aimed at creating modern Arabic literature. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire following the World War II, this movement spread to the other Arabian countries. It also stimulated the British, who had hitherto confined themselves to trade and political relations. The Arab response reflects a state of contradiction opposing the political hegemony of the west while accepting the European ideas and their techniques. Nationalism, democracy and the principle of self-determination were the most important of these ideas. The Egyptian occupation of Syria (1831-40 CE) was another breakthrough in this direction. Arab nationalism begin with a broad premise- the region's entire population was seen as a part of one nation. Taking ideas from the west, the Syrians started an intellectual movement. In the Arab states, political intervention took the form of mandates: the British took control of Palestine and Iraq while the French established control over Syria and Lebanon. In future, local interests and responses divided Arab lands into smaller nations, beginning with Saudi Arabia in 1927 CEuntil the British withdrawals in 1960s and 70s. Their break with the political past had been quite revolutionary and the transformation to modern state was different from the west.

19.4 Trading Activities

During the period of transition to Modern World there was a rise in the trading activities. Growth of maritime trade was the key feature of the intercontinental trade. In this process East Asia and the Arab World contributed and participated significantly.

19.4.1 Rise of Europe as the Centre of World Trade

The commencement of modern trading activities and the expansion of commercial economy were closely relatedto the 15th century maritime activities through geographical explorations and discovery of unknown lands. The European states did have trade links with Asia via overland transport till this time. The Italian merchants bought spices such as pepper, cinnamon, mace, etc. as well as silk and cotton pieces from the east, from India and beyond, and trans-shipped to Europe. Similarly, in exchange for European goods some regions of Africa sent gold and precious stones. In the 15th century, the rise of Ottoman Empire in the eastern parts of Europe created problems for the overland trade routes to Asia. This fact as well as Crusades led to vigorous search for new sea routes to Asia. In these undertakings, the Portuguese and the Spaniards provided leadership. Christopher Columbus of Spain discovered America in 1492 CE which marked the beginning of the world of two hemispheres and became an important step towards the circumnavigation of the globe. His discovery is more valuable because it marks the first stage of global integration that proved most beneficial for the Europeans. The discovery of new sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 CE marked the beginning of the European imperialism in Asia and Africa. Ferdinand Magellan was the first person to orbit the earth and showed that oceans are not an obstacle to journeys but a facilitator.

Europe became the centre of the emerging world economy as a result ofbuilding of trade linkages and sea routes connecting different parts of the world. Maritime trade became the most popular means of transporting goods from one continent to another. Not only did the volume of international trade increased enormously, but there was a drastic change in commodity pattern as well. These voyages for economic gains proved to be a turning point in human history. The discovery of silver mine at Potosi in Central America by the Spaniards had global implications. The maritime superiority of the Europeans along with the use of firearms in trading activities led to their domination of the global trading network. Trade acted as a tool of expansion and aided in the creation of modern world.

The transformation of Europeproceeded through a diverse path. Some changes were of rapid and abrupt nature, while others were gradual incorporating the old and the new to create new ways of life. The long distance trade, in immediate terms contributed to the shipping industry and provided great spur to the merchant marines. Historians such as Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Eric R. Wolf, and others, have emphasised the importance of population migrations after this period. While there was hardly any scope of migration to Africa and Asia as they were already highly populated, the vast tracts of America and the West Indies provided a lot of opportunities to those who desired to capture them. Many Portuguese migrated to Brazil while millions of Spaniards went to Central and South America and the West Indies. This was followed by the migration of Dutch, the English, the French and the Germans from the continent to Canada and North America. They all had different reasons for exodus; to exploit the new wealth, to participate in trade, to make fortune in the new lands, to raise one's social status, to escape the tyrannical rules and oppressive religion while the missionaries went out to promote their religion.

The influx of the Europeans in America led to an exchange of crops and diseases, which Alfred W. Crosby calls it as 'biological consequences'. The exchange of plants and animals led to a globalisation of biology. Europe's discovery of the new territorieschanged the nature of trade between Europe and the New World. Colonial trade brought new agricultural products to Europe which were rich in dietary value, such as tomatoes, cocoa, tobacco, potato, maize, peanuts etc.To some extent maize and potato crops solved the problem of feeding the growing population. The arrival of a number of new crops and their adaptation and spreading to other climatic zones had significant nutritional consequences. The process of adaptation was gradual as taste had to be cultivated for these. In some European regions, potato became one of the staple crops while maize gradually replaced rye and millet. Tomato, another American vegetable,altered the menu of the people all over the world. From one region to another, products of daily consumption were exchanged. Like tea and coffee, Asian rice, ginger and black pepper reached the New World. Migration of population also led to the exchange of diseases in both directions. While Europe was affected by yellow fever and syphilis, small pox, measles, chicken pox, and bubonic plague spread to other regions. The spread of small pox caused huge demographic losses in the New World after it first appeared in 1518 CE. This has been described by a historian as 'bacteriological warfare'. The exchange of animals between the two worlds benefitted the both. On the other hand, the dehumanizing consequences associated with the European expansion were quite evident. Slave trade was one such result. Thousands of Africans and some Asians were bought through agents, often abducted and beaten and taken forever away from their families to uncharted lands. The exploitation of the Blacks and Amerindians led to a drastic decline in their population. Many of them died during sea voyages or due to foreign conditions.With the spread of ideas of enlightenment ideas during the 18th century, there were strong protests against such practices.

The discovery of unknown routes and territories by the Europeans led tobroadening of knowledge of geography and cosmography. Many old views and theories were discarded such as the shape of earth or the problem of distances. New literature started appearing on these subjects whichaided the process of unifying the world. On the one hand, the expansion of world trade encouraged commercial economy based on exchange and thereby led to the rise of bourgeoisie and on the other hand, acted as a factor for the decline of feudalism. During the 16th century, there was a vast extension and the broadening of the world-system. Trading and commercial activities witnessed an acceleration and there was a shift in the mode of production which was moving in the capitalist direction (except in Russia and China)

19.4.2 Trading Activities in East Asia

China had isolated itself from the West for all these years in regarding tradealthough Chinese goods were reaching Europe via Levant through the Arabs. During the stay of Italian traveller Marco Polo in China in the late 13th century, considerable quantities of Chinese silk, textiles, porcelains and other trading items reached parts of Asia, East Africa, the Middle East, Mediterranean and even coastal Europe through sea routes or caravans. However, these commercial contacts were greatly reduced and there was a reduction of commercial activities

between the early 14thand late 15th centuries affecting the entire Eurasia. Marco Polo's accounts of the Asian wealth and luxuriesattracted many sea voyagers and traders. When the Europeans were discovering new sea routes to Asia and America,the Chinese political troubles of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and economic crisis were on the decline. In the European and the Middle Eastern markets the Chinese goods were highly valued. The entry of Portuguese into the Indian Ocean and their trading settlements in Asia gave them greater accessibility to the market. The Chinese porcelain was now reaching Lisbon and Antwerp in plenty. During the 17th century, the Dutch also started importing Chinese luxury goods. The Chinese imported only silver with the Europeans. The pressure of rising population, the rising monetary problems, increasing dependence on silver as a medium of exchange and considerable decline in the domestic production in China were the main factors that made her to engage in silver import from the West.

In China, the government strictly controlled trade.State policy towards trade appears to have been somewhat relaxed during the 15th century to encourage silver mining, although this failed to increase production. However, developments outside China had significant impact on its economy. Production in the silver mines of Central Europe increased by almost 500 per cent between 1460 and 1530 CE. This triggered and continued economic activities in Western Eurasia. It became an important place for the purchase of oriental luxuries, especially the Chinese. Silver from Europe was reaching China through this route. Later on, the discovery of silver mines in Central and South America greatly increased international circulation of silver bullion. Thus, there were three major routes through which silver reached Asia:

(i) from Acapulo on the west coast of Mexico to Manila in the Philippines,

(ii) from the Spanish colonies in America to Portugal and through the Portuguese traders it reached Asia,

(iii) the other European countries such as the Dutch, the English and the French also carried large quantity of silver to purchase Asian products.

Meanwhile, the political unification of Japan in late 16thand early 17th centuries greatly increased silver production in Japan. Trade between China and Japan resulted in a large inflow of silver into China and the Portuguese also participated in this trade and thereby increased its volume. The entry of Portuguese into China at Macao (1557 CE) opened the door for the other Europeans. The expansion of trade between Spain and Manila proved to beprofitable to the Chinese as it resulted in a steady increase of import of her silk by the New World. However, foreign trade and silver imports created problems for the Chinese. Although the problem of chronic shortage of precious metal could not be solved, these imports contributed to the process of urbanisation and resulted in frequent monetary fluctuations and business speculation. Although foreign trade never ceased, its volume declined significantly by the 18th century. In the 19thcentury, the favourable balance of trade was reversed with the arrival of the British, who began selling opium as a substitute of silver. Subsequently, the western European powers conducted an aggressive form of trade which became a threat to the Chinese establishment. This marks the phase of western

imperialism in China.Like many other regions facing a similar situation, theChinese responsewas to pursue a programme of modernisation by adopting western science and technology but retaining her culture. Thus, international trade facilitated a change.

19.4.3 Trading Activities of the Arabs

The two most prosperous trading zones of the medieval world–the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean had been successfully connected by the Arabs. The bulk of the maritime trade between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, in the Middle Ages, passed through the Red Sea. The trade belt had shifted alternately several times between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea mainly due to turbulent political conditions. Cairo became an important centre of trade and manufacturing. Egypt maintained active trade relations with the Italian states in this period. Egypt and Persia were strong maritime states on the East African coast but both did not maintain permanent fleets in the Indian Ocean. Ming China was more powerful but the Chinese had started retreating from this region. The arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean resulted in a breach in the Arab maritime domination although it did end completely until at least the early18thcentury. In 1513 CE, Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor of Goa, failed to break the strong walls of Aden, the chief entrepot at the mouth of the Red Sea. Later he managed to capture Ormuz on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf. The Portuguese followed a policy of entering into an alliance with Persia against the Ottoman Empire exploiting the religious differences between the two. They established naval bases instead of adopting the policy of territorial conquests and developed a network of supplementary trades. Unlike Europeans, they did not create new trade routes in Asia. For centuries, Asian trade routes had existed in the Indian Ocean linking East Africa, Arab coast, India, Southeast Asian islands and the Chinese coast. Initially, the Portuguese participated in it and then established their dominance with the help of their naval strength. After the advent of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, the Arab trade moved towards the west. The demand for Iranian silk increased with the decline of the Italian silk industry and the contraction of the Chinese trade. From the middle of the14thcentury, Tabriz was a trading emporium of Asian goods and replaced Baghdad and the other cities of this region, but changing conditions made Basra an important silk centre. Gradually, the Arab region lost its place in the world trade until the construction of Suez Canal in the 19th century. Its importance suddenly increased with the discovery of the oil mines, which played an important role in the formation of modern trade structure.

Self-Check Exercise

1. What do you understand by the word ‘modernization’?
2. Explain the term ‘Modern World”.
3. What were the factors that resulted in the transition from medieval to modern world?
4. What was *Stato*?
5. What has been regarded as the catalyst that transformed traditional China into a modern nation?

6. Which dynasty brought about the cultural transformation of the Arab states?
7. Name the literary movement of the 19th century, aimed at creating modern Arabic literature.
8. Which discovery marked the beginning of the European imperialism in Asia and Africa?
9. What do you understand by the term ‘biological consequences’?
10. What is ‘bacteriological warfare’?
11. Whose accounts of the Asian wealth drew the attention of many sea voyagers and traders?
12. Name the 14th century Arabian city which has been the trading emporium of the Asian goods.

19.5 Summary

- The Europe of the late-15thcentury was quite different from Europe of the mid-14th century.
- The economy had turned more complex and new patterns of trade and manufacturing were developing and Europe was on the threshold of modernity.
- Feudal structure began to disintegrate in some parts of Europe, leading to agrarian changes.
- The decline of feudalism led to the emergence of centralised states under absolute rulers and conditions for capitalist development were created under them.
- Further, constitutional changes and popular revolutions gave rise to liberal democratic structures,however, their nature differed from state to state.
- The new trade routes and long-distance trade contributed to the emergence of modern world order.
- The rise of international trade acted as a solvent of feudal system, expanded the European economy including commerce and manufacturing and pushed it in the capitalist direction

19.6 Glossary

Amerindians: The natives of America who were called Indians or red Indians.

Capitalist:A person who has capital especially invested in business industrial capitalists broadly.

Cosmography: The branch of science which deals with the general features of the universe, including the earth.

Demographic: Relating to the structure of populations.

Maritime: Connected with the sea, especially in relation to seaborne trade or naval matters.

Suez Canal: The *Suez Canal* is an artificial waterway in Egypt extending from Port Said to Suez and connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea.

19.7 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. The word ‘modernisation’ means making suitable changes and bringing reforms to meet the present day challenges. It comprises changes in political and economic structures and to develop social attitudes based on rationality and scientific approach.

2. Modern World can be explained as the transition from agrarian to the industrial and the capitalist stage.
3. A combination of factors-demographic, trade, inner contradiction in the feudal mode of production and class conflict, resulted in the transition from medieval to modern world.
4. In Italy, the concentration of power in the hands of the rulers was called as *stato*.
5. Infiltration of the West.
6. Abbasid Dynasty
7. *Annahdah al-Adabiyah*
8. The discovery of new sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 CE.
9. The influx of the Europeans in America led to an exchange of crops and diseases, which Alfred W. Crosby calls it as 'biological consequences'.
10. The spread of small pox caused huge demographic losses in the New World after it first appeared in 1518 CE. This has been described by a historian as 'bacteriological warfare'.
11. Accounts of Italian traveller Marco Polo.
12. Tabriz

19.8 Suggested Readings

1. Braudel, F, *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th - 18th century*, Vol. I- III, London, 1982.
2. Denis Twitchett & Frederick W. Mote (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 8, The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, Cambridge, 1998.
3. Edward M. Burns, Philip L. Ralph et al, *Western Civilisations*, Vol. II, 1991.
4. Geoffrey Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion 1400-1715*, Routledge, 1989.
5. Philip K. Hitti, *The Arabs, A Short History*, Regnery Publishing, 1996.

19.9 Terminal Questions

1. What do you understand by the term 'Modern World'?
2. Compare the agricultural developments of Europe with those of China and the Arabs.
3. Discuss the role of the emergence of strong centralized states in Europe to the creation of modern world.
4. What are the two divergent views of historians regarding the time period of beginning of modern China.
5. Give a brief account of the transformation of Arab political structure.
6. How did Europe emerged as the center of world trade? Explain.
7. Discuss the trade structure in East Asia.
8. Write a note on the trading activities of the Arabs.

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CHAPTER-20
TRANSITION TO MODERN WORLD-I

Structure:

20.0 Introduction

The last years of the 15th century and early years of the 16th century laid the foundation of the modern worldview. The 16th century witnessed extraordinary transformation of the world. It marked the beginning of the modern era of knowledge, skill, art and science. Progress in the field of culture in the non-European societies first influenced Europe and were later themselves deeply influenced by the European developments in the field of science and technology. Scientific and cultural developments in Europe created new social attitudes and influenced the mentality of the people. Improvements in the science of manufacturing, artillery, weapons, shipping techniques and military warfare led to the supremacy of the western world.

Objectives

After studying this Chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the impact of international trade on manufacturing and commerce in different parts of the world,
- Examine the cultural trends in different societies and the ways in which these contributed to the formation of new social attitudes,
- Learn about the transformation in the methods of warfare.

20.1 Economic Modernization-Transformation in Trade, Commerce and Industry

The rise of modern world economy from the 16thcentury with new trade routes and enormous growth of trade volume had a profound impact on the European economy. There was a fundamental transformation in the balance of European society with the arrival of bullion from the New World.This resulted in rapid development of capitalism and a spirit of enterprise in trade and manufacturing sectors. Increasing urbanization due to growth of population growth created more demand for industrial products. In order to handle the increasing demand, the structure and trade also experienced significant changes. Due to this economic activities increased manifold. All these factors pushedEurope towards modernization.

During the 15th century, trade expansion was going on. The opening of commercial economy resulted in changes in the form of business organisations. In late medieval period, trade was conducted either by individuals or as a family partnership. Business organisations such as *Commendas* or *Societa*in Italy were short-term enterprisesconfined to single journey or a very brief period. Increase intrade volume required changes in trade management. The regulated companies such as Merchant Adventurers of England emerged in the late medieval period. Many others such as the Eastland Company, the Levant Company, the Muscovy Company, etc., were assigned specific territories to carry out trade on the lines of monopoly. Subsequently, joint stock companies were formed which enjoyed a number of advantages like permanent form, more financial resources through public shares, and a corporate system of functioning. By the 17th century,aseveral of these companies likeDutch East India Company,English East India Company, Mineral and Battery Works Company in Englandand French East India Companycame into existence in various European states.

At the international level, the rise of exchange economy started changing the market structure. The transition from a largely self-sustained medieval economy to a well-developed exchange economy resulted in the rise of permanent market structures in place of weekly markets or fairs. Manyrepresentatives appeared to conduct specialised market operations such as retail trading, warehousing, brokerage etc. New trading cities were getting interconnected with trade information, postal services, and newspapers. There was a change in the nature of banking operations from the stage of merchant banker family activities of the medieval Italy and Germany to the level of public banking. In Venice, Milan, Amsterdam, Hamburg and Nuremberg a number of such banks were established. These banks had their roots in medieval times. More banking facilities resulted in adoption of new methods of financial transactions. This marked the advent of Commercial Revolution in Europe from the late 16thcentury. The Italians had already created many credit instruments such as promissory notes, letters of credit, bills of exchange and commercial practices such as the book-keeping systems, the double-entry methods of accounting and the insurance systems. From the 16thcentury, the rest of Europe adopted these methods of credit instrumentson a much larger scale. By the 17th century, negotiability of credit instruments became an important feature of commercial transactions. With the expansion of trading network, trading risks during long sea voyages considerably increased manifold leading to the popularization of the concept of insurance. The Italian merchants engaged in maritime insurance from the 15th century but later it was extended

to other fields of commercial activities. The growingdemand of capital for the purpose of trade investments and manufacturing led to the formation of stock exchanges in many European countries. The Amsterdam Stock Exchange made significant progress not only in terms of scale but also in terms of organisation. According to Fernand Braudel, these stock exchanges became the meeting place of bankers, merchants and traders, currency dealers, brokers and investors. They introduced the modern concept of financial transactions.

A proper integration of economic activities i.e., agriculture, trade and industry started from the late 15th century. While a number of traditional crafts continued and expanded, many new industries developed such as those of glass manufacturing, copper, brass, paper and the most importantly, the textiles. Although, it took a long time for the technology to change, there were frequent changes in the nature of organizing these manufacturing activities. There was a sharp decline in agricultural income as a result of Black Deaths and economic recession. The most important development was the collapse of medieval craft guilds in some parts of Europe and the establishment of the rural cottage industry in England, Holland, France and Germany. This was to avoid the strict rules of the guilds that led to high cost of production with no corresponding increase in productivity. The rural industries took advantage of low wages and cheap waterpower and manufactured cheaper clothesfor the ordinary people. Gradually, the putting-out system was adopted at the expense of guilds. This is known as the phase of **proto-industrialisation** that led to the creation of modern industries. Similarly, coal mining progressed rapidly at a time when Europe experienced mounting pressure of population and shortage of wood. Subsequently, the iron industry developed with improvements in technology. This paved the way for industrial revolution, which not only had dire consequences on the European economy but also affected the entire world.

20.2 Cultural Transformation-Science, Religion and Society

Let us discuss the contribution of China, Arab World and Europe in the cultural transformation.

20.2.1 China

The Chinese were the pioneers in developing science and technology to suit the needs of society. The mechanical appliances comprised the south-pointing carriage. They developed kites and prepared matches (577 CE) which reached Europe at the end of the 16th century. The wheelbarrow, folding umbrella, navigational knowledge including compass, printing, the art of making paper and gunpowder were alldevelopments in the field of science and technology. The Chinese had made amazing astronomical observations long before the Europeans. They regularly observed novas and supernovas in 1006 CE. They were the first to methodically catalogu the stars. The Chinese geographers prepared some of the earliest accurate maps based on grid system, much before the Europeans. When these discoveries reached Europe they revolutionised the Western European society but in China its impact wasonly modest. For example, printing contributed greatly to the spread of classical humanism and the ideas of Renaissance and Reformation. However, in China it only spread the traditional ideas and thus helped to maintain the class hegemony of traditional scholars. The introduction of gunpowder permanently revolutionized European life. It hastened the decline of feudalism in Europe. It made castles and other medieval fortifications out-dated and thus

aided in liberating Western Europe from feudal, social and political domination. However, historian Lynda Shaffer cautions the readers to assess the history of Chinaon the basis of later events in Europe. She suggests that in order to find changes in China, one must abandon the search for specific European events in Chinese history. For example, printing contributed to a rebirth of classical Confucian learning and influenced the political system by replacing the government administered examinations as it provided books at affordable rates to the students preparing for such examinations. So the extent and intensity of influence varied from society to society, depending on the receptivity and response of each region.

Under Sung Dynasty, with a strong economic base through trade and agriculture and the technological and scientific advances China was on the verge of major industrialisation. The whole process was, however, delayed due to political turmoil during the 13th and the 14th centuriesdue to Mongol occupation and subsequent adoption of a strong conservative state policy.

20.2.2 Arab World

Between 900 and 1100 CE, the Arabs witnessed a remarkable growth in the scientific field. Several institutions of higher learning were established. In Baghdad, a library of valuable manuscripts had been collected. It was the Arab mathematics, which is believed to have created algebra. The concept of numerology was borrowed from India which was later carried to Europe by scholars and came to be known as the Arab numerals. *Al-Khwarizmi* was their famous mathematician. Mathematics was used in the study of astronomy and in commerce, as the Arabs were great traders. They established the observatories and attained greater precision than the Greeks. They are renowned for their contributions in alchemy and chemistry.

In the Islamic world medicine was another well-developed field. Perhaps *Al-Razi* was the greatest Arab physician. He wrote a number of monographs including a treatise on measles and small pox. The contribution of Arabs in the field of science, technology and culture was no less than that of the Europeans and it is because of this reason that Ameer Ali describe them as the "Vanguard of Civilisation". The Europeans attained a great deal of their scientific knowledge from the Caliphate countries, which had been filtered through Spain, when the Arabs conquered it later on. The Arabs were renowned for their expertise of navigation science, shipbuilding and cartography. Being located halfway between the Far East and Europe, they enjoyed a great geographical advantage.Since they had invented numerous mariner's instruments, they relished a lucrative maritime trade. They possessed important centres of manufacturing silk and cotton goods in Egypt and Damascus, luxury textilesin Yemen and Mosul, carpets in Khurasan and Armenia and coloured glass industry in Syria from whom the Venetians learnt of this art to become famous in the world. The Arabs became the teachers of later western scholars in many fields of sciencesuch as the astronomy, arithmetic and algebra.

The geographical location of the Arabia facilitated the expansion of Arabs in all directions and led to the assimilation of the achievements of the conquered people. On the one hand they became the natural successors of Hellenistic culture that had spread throughout the Near East, the Persian Empire and Egypt. On the other hand, their direct contact with India and through it to

the Far East enhanced their trade and culture. After the 16th century, however, all these developments were stalled. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was due to their conflict with the west or it was the result of internal collapse. Perhaps both these factors tended to delay their efforts to modernize.

20.2.3 Europe

Cultural transformation in Europestarted with Renaissance and Reformation movement of the15th and the 16thcenturies. Renaissance was a significant cultural movement that arose as a reaction to the medieval culture and aimed at reshaping social values. Humanism was one of the stream of the Renaissance which was a literary movement that emphasized individualism and secularism. It laid stress on the dignity of man and public virtues and attempted to transform intellectual life by providing fresh insight to education, philosophy, history and politics. Machiavelli, the renowned political thinker of the Renaissance period, recommended separation of politics from religion which forms the basis of modern political system. Renaissance created a new culture in Europe though it arose in the medieval conditions. There were attempts in the later medieval period to reform the Church but they were unsuccessful. The Reformation movementaltered the religious outlook of the people and the reformed religion. It removed the traditional barriersto capitalist development by encouraging frugality, worldly vocation or 'calling', and approving the charging of interest on productive loans. This new approach paved the way for capitalism and enterprise.

As far as the gender relations are concerned, the social status of women in the medieval society for majority of them was concealed for most of them with legal limitations and indignities. For adultery, witchcraft or thefta man could offer divorce, even kill his wife and remarry but this was not permitted for the wife. Many women belonging to the general section of the society, whose marriage could not be arranged due to various reasons, entered the convents. However, unlike their male counterparts, they could not rise in the Church hierarchy. Women belonging to the aristocratic family were relatively better placed. Humanist movement and Reformation recognised the need of providing basic education to women but it was not with the purpose of widening their intellectual horizon but simply to enable them to read Bible and be good wives and good mothers. Due to the development of market economy, competition among the artisans adversely affected the status of women. They were often put out by the guild.From the late Middle Ages till the 17thcentury, women, especially the widows and spinsters, were subjected to the most abhorring practice of witchcrafts. They were considered morally weaker and therefore easy victims of Satan's temptations. The spread of scientific ideasput an end to the widespread practice of witchcraft. The plight of women improved due to the spread of proto-industrialisation. However, they continued to struggle for their political rights and gender equality during the 20th century. For them the modern world began much later.

The greatest achievement of the Europeans was in the field of modern science. A succession of discovery and inventions, some of them attained with the help of Asian knowledge of science, transformed society and created modern attitudes to the world. Undoubtedly, the Arabs had preserved and translated the Greek natural philosophy, while the Chinese invented technological tools but it

was only in Europe that there was a true integration of observation, experimentation and formulation of scientific laws based on mathematical application. A mechanical picture of world which was free from divine intervention was created. This came to be called **Scientific Revolution**. It was the work of not only a few scientists but also several institutions, including some scientific academies that created a social environment for scientific activities. Particularly noteworthy is the role of Rene Descartes and Sir Francis Bacon in the development of scientific method to spread scientific and rational spirit among the people.Copernicus, Kepler and Newton successfully demolished the Aristotle's view of the world that had dominated the European mind for almost 1300 years and replaced it by the modern scientific view. Thus, it was this rapid progress in the field of science that laid the real foundations of the modern world.Rationality, experimentation and scientific temper became the symbols of the western society that widened the geographical and intellectual horizons that brought them to the stage of modernity.

20.3 Modern Methods of Warfare

The economic level reflects the state of technology. The medieval warfare was based more on the military strength and personal bravery rather than technical knowledge. In the medieval times there was construction of fort-like palaces by the feudal nobility to meet the military requirements. These proved effective as long as the military technology was confined to simple warfare. The introduction of catapult replaced wooden structures with stone palaces. The introduction of gunpowder completelyrefuted the advantages which the warrior class had hitherto enjoyed. Gunpowder was a Chinese invention but it assumed a deadly character in Europe and had a devastating impact. The Chinese had been producing it since the 9th century with saltpetre, sulphur and crushed charcoal. In the view of renowned historians, the Chinese cannonwas equal or superior to the canon used in Europe in the early 15th century. However, Europe took the lead in the subsequent period. It caused panic in native country when the Europeans used the improved version in the 16thcentury. The Chinese had failed to develop it themselves for the needs of war. By the 15th century, the introduction of new type of weapons like artillery and the improved heavy canons revolutionised the character of military warfare in Europe. The development of corned gunpowder around 1420 CE provided the benefit of immediate combustion. In 1453 CE, two important conflicts of medieval Europe were settled due to the use of heavy artillery. During the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453 CE), it was used by the French to expel the English from France and to recapture Bordeaux.It was also used by the Ottoman Turks to capture Constantinople. The old form of feudal warfare was made redundant by the use of canon as its heavy cost could not be afforded the by individual nobles. Subsequently, this benefitted the national rulers who had all the financial resources and had their own standing army.

In the 15th century, there appeared large-bore and mobile artillery which was capable of following the swift movements of the troops. Initially it was first carried on oxen but was pulled on powerful horses in the Spanish war in Italy in 1494 CE. None of the town could endure its assaults easily. Constant improvements were carried out with the passage of time. During the 16th century, naval artillery was introduced in the period of early colonial empires. The increasing threat of privateers in the high seas forced all ships to be equipped with specialist gunners in artillery. Many other

weapons such as harquebuses, muskets and rifleswere devised. These weapons replaced the inter-state warfare and resulted in the adoption of aggressive policy of territorial expansion. The Europeans used cannons in their ships in search of overseas expansion. By using these weapons they conquered almost the entire central and South America and carried out settlements in the West Indian islands. Not only the use of these weapons but also its mass production, the availability of capital to maintain it and the constant effort of Europeans to use scientific knowledge to improve it gave them a distinct edge over the rest of the world.Due to this armed superiority successful control over a large part of the world was achieved. Warner Sombart, discusses a new type of war, invigorated by technology, whichaccelerated the establishment of capitalism.

Self-Check Exercise

1. What is Proto-industrialization?
2. Name any two scientific inventions of China during the Middle Ages.
3. What was the impact of the introduction of gunpowder?
4. Name the famous Arab mathematician.
5. Write the name of greatest Arab physician.
6. Why Arabs have been called as the "Vanguard of Civilisation"?
7. Name the renowned political thinker of the Renaissance period who recommended separation of politics from religion which forms the basis of modern political system.
8. What is Scientific Revolution?
9. Name the two European scientists who greatly contributed to the development of scientific method to spread scientific and rational spirit among the people.
10. When were the two important conflicts of medieval Europe were settled due to the use of heavy artillery?

20.4 Summary

- The 16^{th} century witnessed extraordinary transformation of the world. It marked the beginning of the modern era of knowledge, skill, art and science.
- The rise of modern world economy from the 16^{th} century with new trade routes and enormous growth of trade volume had a profound impact on the European economy which ultimately pushed Europe towards modernization.
- The opening of commercial economy resulted in changes in the form of business organisations. The regulated companies such as Merchant Adventurers of England emerged in the late medieval period.
- Subsequently, joint stock companies like Dutch East India Company, English East India Company, Mineral and Battery Works Company in England and French East India Company were formed in Europe which enjoyed a number of advantages.
- At the international level, the rise of exchange economy started changing the market structure. By the 17^{th} century, negotiability of credit instruments became an important feature of commercial transactions.
- With the expansion of trading network, trading risks during long sea voyages considerably increased manifold leading to the popularization of the concept of insurance.

- A proper integration of economic activities i.e., agriculture, trade and industry started from the late 15th century.
- Gradually, the putting-out system was adopted at the expense of guilds. This is known as the phase of proto-industrialisation that led to the creation of modern industries.
- The Chinese were the pioneers in developing science and technology to suit the needs of society. The wheelbarrow, folding umbrella, navigational knowledge including compass, printing, the art of making paper and gunpowder were all developments in China in the field of science and technology.
- Between 900 and 1100 CE, the Arabs witnessed a remarkable growth in the scientific field. They contributed greatly in the field of mathematics, astronomy, geography and medicine.
- Cultural transformation in Europe started with Renaissance and Reformation movement of the 15th and the 16th centuries. As far as the gender relations are concerned, the social status of women in the medieval society for majority of them was concealed for most of them with legal limitations and indignities.
- The greatest achievement of the Europeans was in the field of modern science. A succession of discovery and inventions, some of them attained with the help of Asian knowledge of science, transformed society and created modern attitudes to the world.
- The medieval warfare was based more on the military strength and personal bravery rather than technical knowledge. However, the introduction of catapult, gunpowder and the improved heavy canons revolutionised the character of military warfare in Europe.
- Many other weapons such as arquebuses, muskets and rifles were devised. These weapons replaced the inter-state warfare and resulted in the adoption of aggressive policy of territorial expansion by the Europeans.

20.5 Glossary

- **Alchemy:** The practice of trying to convert other metals into gold that never succeeded.
- **Harquebus:** Early type of portable gun supported on tripod by hook or on forked rest.
- **Catapult:**A machine which worked on the principle of lever and ropes to discharge stones or other objects at a higher speed on a target and was used in medieval warfare.
- **Humanism:** The revival of interest in classical art and literature, the increase in individualism and emphasis on secular concerns that was a characteristic of Renaissance.
- **Novas and Supernovas:** A sudden lightening of stars due to explosion of gas.
- **Putting-out system:** A system in which entrepreneurs advance the required capital and raw material to artisan or craftsman and the latter works at home to finish the productordered.

20.6 Answers to Self-Check Exercise

1. Proto-industrialisation is the phase of industrialisation that was not based on the factory system. Before the advent of factories, there was large-scale production for international market. However, the pace of this production was very slow. This part of industrial history is called as proto-industrialization.

2. Paper making and Gunpowder.
3. It hastened the decline of feudalism in Europe.
4. *Al-Khwarizmi*
5. *Al-Razi*
6. The contribution of Arabs in the field of science, technology and culture was no less than that of the Europeans and it is because of this reason that Ameer Ali describe them as the "Vanguard of Civilisation".
7. Machiavelli
8. The Scientific Revolution was a series of events that marked the emergence of modern science during the early modern period, when developments in various fields of science transformed the views of society about nature.
9. Rene Descartes and Sir Francis Bacon.
10. In 1453 CE

20.7 Suggested Readings

1. Asimov, Isaac, *Asimov's Chronology of Science and Discovery*, New York, 1989.
2. Bernal, J.D., *Science in History*, Vol.2, London, 1969.
3. Butterfield, H.J., *The Origins of Modern Science: 1300-1800*, New York, 1958.
4. Cameron, Euan, *The European Reformation*, Oxford, 1991.
5. Chadwick, O., *The Reformation*, Baltimore, 1976.
6. Cipola, C.M. Guns, *Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion, 1400-1700*, New York, 1965.
7. Hall, A.R., *The Scientific Revolution: 1500-1800*, London, 1962.
8. Spangenburg, Ray and Moser, Diane K., *The History of Science: From the Ancient Greeks to the Scientific Revolution*, Hyderabad, 1999.
9. William H. McNeill, *The Age of Gunpowder Empires, 1450-1800 (Essays on Global and Comparative History)*,Amer Historical Assn, 1990.

20.8 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the process of economic modernization that led to the emergence of modern world.
2. Evaluate the progress of China and the Arabs in the field of science. Why these could not transform their respective societies?
3. Bring out the chief features of the cultural transformation that changed Europe from medieval age to modern.
4. Explain how the new methods of warfare proved to be beneficial to the Europeans?

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Assignments (Compulsory) ICDEOL, H.P. University

M.A. History 1st Semester **Course-HIST 103**

Aspects of Medieval Society

Maximum Marks =20

Note: Attempt four (04) questions in total. One question is compulsory from each unit. All questions carry equal marks.

कुल चार प्रश्न कीजिए। प्रत्येक इकाई से एक प्रश्न करना जरूरी है। सभी प्रश्नों के अंक समान है।

UNIT-I

1. Describe the changes that took place in the political and economic life in western Europe after the downfall of the Roman Empire.

   रोमन साम्राज्य के पतन के बाद पश्चिमी यूरोप में राजनीतिक और आर्थिक जीवन में हुए परिवर्तन का वर्णन कीजिए।

2. During the middle ages what was the role of church in the daily life of the people?

   मध्य युग के दौरान लोगों के दैनिक जीवन में चर्च की क्या भूमिका थी।

UNIT-II

3. Throw a light on the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

   पैगम्बर मुहम्मद के जीवन और शिक्षाओं पर प्रकाश डालिए।

4. Arab Civilization in the Medieval Period left behind a legacy of discoveries and achievements. Justify this statement.

   मध्य युगीन काल में अरब सभ्यता ने खोजों और उपलब्धियों की विरासत को पीछे छोड़ दिया। इस कथन का औचित्य सिद्ध कीजिए।

Unit-III

5. Discuss the rights and obligations of lords and vassals in feudatory relations.

   सामन्ती सम्बन्धों में स्वामी और जागीरदारों के अधिकारों और दायित्वों पर चर्चा करें।

6. Elucidate the causes for the fall of Manorial system.

   मोनोरिअल व्यवस्था के पतन के कारणों को स्पष्ट करें।

Unit-IV

7. Give a brief account of the India maritime trade in the 15th Century.

   15वीं शताब्दी में भारतीय समुद्री व्यापार का संक्षिप्त विवरण दीजिए।

8. Discuss the process of economic modernization that led to the emergence of Modern world.

   आर्थिक आधुनिकीकरण की उस प्रक्रिया की चर्चा कीजिए जिसके कारण आधुनिक विश्व का उदय हुआ।

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